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SALAR
DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

سالار روزنامہ بنگلور

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WB SIR deletes 91 L voters, max in Muslim-majority areas

People whose names were deleted from voters' lists in West Bengal queue up to present their cases before judicial officers in Nadia —PTI

KOLKATA, 7 APRIL

Nearly 91 lakh voters have been deleted from West Bengal's electoral rolls following the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise, according to data released by the Election Commission. The final voter base is yet to be officially announced.

Based on 7.66 crore electors identified last October, over 11.85 per cent of names have been removed since the SIR process began. Of 60.06 lakh voters under judicial scrutiny, 27.16 lakh were deleted, while 32.68 lakh were retained.

- Since the start of the SIR, around 63.66 lakh names, 8.3 per cent of the electorate, have been deleted.

Maximum deletions were recorded in Murshidabad, a Muslim-majority district bordering Bangladesh, where 4.55 lakh of 11.01 lakh under review were removed, a deletion rate of 41.33 per cent. Significant removals were also seen in North 24 Parganas, another Bangladesh-border district, with 3.25 lakh deletions of 5.91 lakh under scrutiny, and in Malda, where 2.39 lakh names were deleted. South 24 Parganas saw 2.23 lakh deletions, Purba Bardhaman 2.09 lakh, and Nadia, with a significant Hindu Namashudra Matua population, 2.98 lakh, representing 77.86 per cent of those under adjudication.

In Kolkata, 28,000 voters were deleted in South Kolkata, including Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's Bhabanipur constituency (36.19 per cent), and 39,000 in North Kolkata (64 per cent).

Since the start of the SIR process in November, around 63.66 lakh names, 8.3 per cent of the electorate, have been deleted, reducing the voter base from 7.66 crore to 7.04 crore.

The final supplementary list has frozen rolls for the first phase of assembly polls, with 152 seats to vote on 23 April and 142 seats in the second phase on 29 April. —PTI

>>>More on Page 3

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri to visit US

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri ill undertake a three-day visit to Washington DC beginning Wednesday to review the full spectrum of India-US ties. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said Misri's 8-10 April trip will provide an opportunity to advance ongoing bilateral cooperation across key areas. The MEA said the foreign secretary will hold discussions with senior officials of the US administration on a wide range of issues, including trade, defence, science and technology, as well as regional and global developments of mutual interest.—PTI

K'taka makes teen pregnancies audit mandatory

BENGALURU, 7 APRIL

The Karnataka government on Tuesday issued an order mandating an audit of all adolescent pregnancy cases across the state, aiming to systematically track, review and address the underlying causes of pregnancies among girls aged 10 to 18 years. The order makes adolescent pregnancy audit mandatory by the Taluk Health Officer (THO) for all pregnancies occurring among girls aged 10 to 18 years across the state. The move is intended to strengthen early identification, counselling and preventive interventions by integrating efforts across health, education and social welfare departments, while leveraging existing programmes such as the National Health Mission (NHM) and Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK). —PTI

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DRDO Chief flags need for faster material dvpt

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

DRDO chief Samir V Kamat on Tuesday highlighted the growing challenge of material development in defence, noting its 10-15 year cycle lags behind the shrinking system development cycle, where new systems emerge every five years or faster in fields like drones. Addressing a defence seminar at Subroto Park, he urged self-reliance in materials, cautioning against dependence on foreign technologies, especially for critical raw materials like rare earths and tungsten. Kamat emphasised using AI/ML and integrated computational methods to shorten development, converting materials into products, and building domestic extraction capabilities. He noted India is self-sufficient in naval hulls and urged holistic focus for Atmanirbharta. —PTI

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No cash at tolls; UPI payments to get dearer

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

Cash payments at toll plazas will be discontinued for travellers on national highways from 10 April, the road transport and highways ministry has said. In a gazette notification, the ministry has said that in cases where a vehicle enters a fee plaza without a valid FASTag, users can still pay via Unified Payment Interface (UPI), but at a higher charge of 1.25 times the applicable toll fee. A senior NHAI official said that the move is aimed at reducing long queues at toll gates and make highway travel smoother for commuters. —PTI

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Kharg Island bombed as Trump's deadline nears

Trump says whole Iranian civilisation will 'die tonight'

TEHRAN/WASHINGTON, 7 APRIL

Blasts were heard on Iran's Kharg Island, according to state media, hours before US President Donald Trump's deadline for the Islamic Republic to strike a deal or face "hell" ended.

The Kharg Island accounts for 90 per cent of Iran's oil trade. US Vice President JD Vance said that the US was set to strike military targets on Kharg Island. A US official said Washington did not strike the oil infrastructure but hit targets it previously struck.

Iran rejected a 45-day ceasefire proposal and said it wants a permanent end to the war as Trump's ultimatum ticked closer. Trump has threatened to strike all of Iran's power plants and bridges if it doesn't make a deal and open the Strait of Hormuz, and said he is "not at all" concerned about committing possible war crimes. The UN Secretary General has stated that the proposed strikes violate international law.

Later, Trump posted on Truth Social that the "whole civilisation will die tonight, never to be brought back".

Kharg Island is Iran's main oil export hub —x

He said that Iran still had time to make a deal.

"Now that we have complete and total regime change, where different, smarter, and less radicalised minds prevail, maybe something revolutionarily wonderful can happen," he wrote. But he said he will likely bomb the country. "47 years of extortion, corruption, and death, will finally end."

However, Iran remained defiant and began forming human chains around its bridges and energy plants. President Masoud Pezeshkian posted on X that 14 million Iranians had answered campaigns urging people to volunteer to fight — and said he would join them.

Iran has also reportedly shut all diplomatic channels with the US, as the war escalated throughout West Asia.

The IRGC said that Iran would "deprive the US and its allies of the region's oil and gas for years" and expand its attacks across the Gulf amid Trump's threat.

WEST ASIA WAR DAY-39

ISRAEL BOMBS IRAN'S RAILWAYS

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that IRGC was using trains to transport materials to make weapons, and announced that Israel had targeted Iran's railways.

Several people were killed in the strikes across Iran.

Earlier, Israel's military warned Iranian civilians against taking the train Iranian on its Persian account: "Your presence on trains and near railway lines endangers your life".

UN RESOLUTION VETOED

Russia and China vetoed a UN Security Council resolution to reopen Hormuz, with 11 votes in favour, two against and two abstentions. The measure had already been diluted to secure support, making its impact on the conflict doubtful. Originally proposed by Bahrain, it authorised "all necessary means", including force, but was revised to allow only "defensive means" after opposition from Russia, China and France. —PTI

>>>More on Pgs 2, 4, 5, 6 & 7

India issues 'stay wherever you are' advisory for Indians in Iran

As tensions escalate in West Asia following Washington's ultimatum to Tehran, India on Tuesday advised its nationals in Iran to remain wherever they are for the next 48 hours. The Indian embassy urged Indians, especially those in embassy-hired hotels, to stay indoors, maintain contact with on-site embassy teams, and monitor official updates. Emergency numbers remain operational. Around 9,000 Indians were in Iran when the conflict began; nearly 1,800 have returned home so far.

10,000
flights to West Asia cancelled since war began: Govt

SABARIMALA ENTRY CASE

Can't treat women as 'untouchable' for 3 days a month: SC

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

A woman cannot be treated as "untouchable" for three days a month and then considered normal on the fourth day, Supreme Court Justice BV Nagarathna observed on Tuesday, during hearings on discrimination against women at religious places, including Kerala's Sabarimala temple.

The nine-judge Constitution bench, led by Chief Justice Surya Kant and including Justices Nagarathna, M M Sundresh, Ahsanuddin Amanullah, Aravind Kumar, Augustine George Masih, Prasanna B Varale, R Mahadevan, and Joymalya Bagchi, is examining broader questions on the interplay between religious freedom (Articles 25 and 26) and the right to equality (Article 14).

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the Centre, objected to the 2018 Sabarimala judgment that deemed the exclusion of women aged 10–50 a form of "untouchability" violating Article 17.

He clarified that the restriction concerns age, not menstruation, and argued that Lord Ayyappa temples elsewhere are open to women, making Sabarimala a sui generis case.

The temple maintains that Lord Ayyappa is an eternal celibate), and restricting women of "menstruating age" preserves the deity's celibate nature, not as gender discrimination.

- The court said that if there is a social ill which is branded as a religious practice then the court can examine whether it is a religious practice or a social evil.

The debate centres on whether the exclusion of women constitutes "untouchability" under Article 17 and if the practice qualifies as an "essential religious practice" protected under Article 26. Opponents argue that since women can worship Ayyappa in thousands of other temples, the Sabarimala restriction violates the right to equality and freedom of worship.

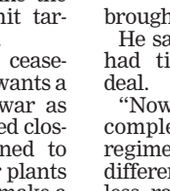
In 2018, a five-judge bench had lifted the ban on women aged 10–50, declaring the practice unconstitutional. In 2019, a larger bench was tasked to examine gender discrimination in places of worship. —PTI

>>>More on Page 4

Cops search Khera's home after Himanta's plaint

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

Assam Police on Tuesday visited the Delhi residence of Congress leader Pawan Khera to question him and conduct a search in connection with a case filed by Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma's wife. Khera was not at home, but police seized electronic devices during the visit.



Khera had alleged that Riniki Bhuyan Sharma holds undisclosed overseas assets worth Rs 52,000 crore, linked to a Wyoming-based company, Asset Collective LLC, with the CM and his son listed as partners. Authorities said some "incriminating material" was found, though details remain confidential. Khera's current whereabouts are unknown. Sarma criticised Congress for using "false information" allegedly sourced from a Pakistani social media group to make "baseless and malicious" claims against his wife, terming it an attempt to influence Assam elections. Minister of State for External Affairs rejected Congress' claim and said they were "fake and fabricated." —PTI

>>>More on Page 3

K'taka HC orders re-verification of ballots in Sringeri

BENGALURU, 7 APRIL

Karnataka High Court has directed the re-verification of 279 rejected postal ballots in the Sringeri Assembly constituency, following a petition challenging the election of Congress MLA TD Rajegowda. The bench, headed by Justice R Nataraj, ordered the re-examination to be completed within two weeks.

The petition was filed by defeated BJP candidate DN Jeevaraj, who alleged irregularities in postal ballot counting and claimed Rajegowda spent Rs 120 crore during the 2023 Assembly polls. Rajegowda had won by a narrow margin of 201 votes, securing 59,171 votes against Jeevaraj's 58,970. During the hearing, Rajegowda's counsel requested a stay on the order pending an appeal to the Supreme Court. The High Court allowed the filing of the appeal and granted an interim stay for two weeks. The 279 postal ballots, out of 2,101 cast, are seen as crucial, as their re-evaluation could alter the result. —PTI

BJP files complaint against Kharge

BENGALURU, 7 APRIL

A delegation of the Karnataka unit of BJP on Tuesday lodged a complaint against Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge with the State Director General and Inspector General of Police MA Saleem, alleging that he made a provocative speech during an election campaign in Assam.

In their submission, the BJP leaders demanded the immediate arrest of Kharge for allegedly inciting violence.

In the complaint, BJP leaders alleged that Kharge, while addressing a rally, compared BJP and RSS to a "poisonous snake". —PTI

>>>More on Page 3

Curfew imposed in Manipur, internet banned for 3 days

IMPHAL, 7 APRIL

The Manipur government on Tuesday imposed an indefinite curfew in Imphal East, Imphal West, Bishnupur and Kakching districts in the wake of violence after two children were killed in a bomb explosion, officials said.

District Magistrates of Imphal West, Imphal East, Bishnupur and Kakching issued the order imposing curfew in their respective districts from Tuesday.

The Manipur government ordered suspension of internet and mobile data services, Broadband, VSATs and VPN in five valley districts of Imphal West, Imphal East, Thoubal, Kakching and Bishnupur for three days, an official statement said. —PTI

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INDIA ON PAR WITH RUSSIA

India's fast breeder reactor at Kalpakkam achieves criticality

KALPAKKAM, 7 APRIL

India's Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR) at Kalpakkam achieved criticality on 6 April 2026, a key milestone in the nation's nuclear energy programme.

Criticality, the point at which a reactor sustains a controlled nuclear chain reaction, is essential before power generation. The 500 MWe PFBR uses molten sodium as coolant and uranium-plutonium mixed oxide (MOX) fuel.

A uranium-238 blanket around the core absorbs neutrons to create new plutonium, making it a breeder reactor that produces more fuel than it consumes. India aims to use thorium-232 in third-stage reactors, converting it into fissile uranium-233—a process enabled by fast neutrons. The PFBR places India alongside Russia in operating fast breeder reactors. —*Salar News*

CANNOT PLAY FOOTSIE WITH STATE: COURT GIVES BAIL TO CONMAN SUKESH

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

A Delhi court on Tuesday granted bail to alleged conman Sukesh Chandrasekhar in an ED case linked to AIADMK's "two leaves" election symbol.

Special Judge Vishal Gogne noted that while money laundering is grave, the court cannot "preach liberty" while "playing footsie with the state upon the bogey of special legislation or economic offences." Chandrasekhar, in jail since April 2022 for this case, has already secured bail in 26 of 31 cases.

The court cited excessive detention beyond half of the maximum PMLA sentence and imposed a personal and surety bond of Rs 5 lakh each, with strict conditions including surrendering his passport. —PTI

Auto driver's friends held for his murder in Belagavi

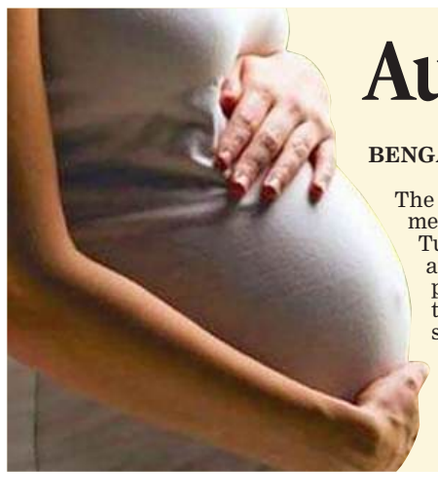
BELAGAVI, 7 APRIL

Police in Kagawad taluk of Belagavi district cracked a recent autorickshaw driver murder case and arrested three accused. The deceased is identified as Ashok Vaddar, 27, a resident of Mangsuli village. The accused — Shiva Vaddar, Sagar Vaddar and Vinod Vaddar — were his friends. According to the police, a heated argument broke out between Ashok and the accused over the registration number of an autorickshaw. The dispute escalated into a violent altercation, during which the accused allegedly assaulted Ashok, striking him on the head. He died on the spot due to severe injuries and blood loss. In attempt to evade suspicion, accused approached police and filed a misleading complaint. —*PTI*

8 held for selling drug in City; Rs 27cr assets seized

BENGALURU, 7 APRIL

Eight people, including a foreign national, have been arrested for alleged drug trafficking in the city, police said on Tuesday, adding that drugs, vehicles and other items worth Rs 27.42 crore were seized. Based on credible inputs about the sale of banned substances such as MDMA, ganja and cocaine, police conducted raids across Hebbagodi, Yelahanka New Town, Mico Layout, Parappana Agrahara, Bagalur and Banaswadi police station limits. Cases were registered under the NDPS Act. Police Commissioner Seemant Kumar Singh said eight accused were arrested on different dates, including one foreign national and four interstate offenders. The accused allegedly sourced drugs from foreign and local suppliers and sold them, including to college students. Seizures include 12.091 kg MDMA, 275 grams cocaine, 34.802 kg ganja and gold ornaments. —*PTI*



Audit of teen pregnancies mandatory in K'taka

BENGALURU, 7 APRIL

The Karnataka government issued an order on Tuesday mandating an audit of all adolescent pregnancy cases across the State, aiming to systematically track, review and address the underlying causes of pregnancies among girls aged 10 to 18 years.

The order makes adolescent pregnancy audit mandatory by the Taluk Health Officer (THO) for all pregnancies occurring among girls aged 10 to 18 years.

The move is intended to strengthen early identification, counselling and preventive interventions by integrating efforts across health, education and social welfare departments, while leveraging existing programmes like the National Health Mission (NHM) and Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK).

All adolescent pregnancies identified in the State must now be compulsorily reported by both government and private healthcare institutions on the Reproductive and Child Health (RCH) platform.

The audit framework will examine multiple socio-medical factors, including age at marriage, educational status, awareness of reproductive health, access to contraception, and family vulnerabilities. It will also assess linkages with schemes like RKSK, Integrated Child Development Services and school health programmes to identify service delivery gaps.

A dedicated audit committee will be constituted under the chairmanship of the THO. Its members will be drawn from primary health centres, field health staff, Anganwadi services and schools. Counselling services, including through Sneha Centres, access to contraceptives, and targeted outreach to vulnerable adolescent groups—school dropouts, migrants and socially disadvantaged households—must be strengthened, it said. — *PTI*

Jabs fly on the last day of campaigning

Joshi rakes up 'love jihad', LoP says it's rich vs poor; DKS alleges conspiracy against guarantees

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar with Davangere contestant Samarth Shamanur; State BJP President BY Vijayendra and Pralhad Joshi with Davangere contestant T Dasakariyappa —*x*

BENGALURU, 7 APRIL

The BJP and Congress upped the ante on the last day of campaigning for the bypolls in Davangere South and Bagalkot assembly constituencies, trading personnel barbs and saying that the results would determine the future of their opponent.

The bypolls scheduled for 9 April were necessitated following the demise of sitting Congress MLAs Shamanur Shivashankarappa and HY Meti, who represented Davangere South and Bagalkot constituencies respectively.

The Congress has fielded Shamanur Shivashankarappa's grandson and Karnataka Minister SS Mallikarjun's son Samarth Shamanur in Davangere South and HY Meti's son Umesh Meti in Bagalkot. They are locked in a direct contest with BJP candidates T Dasakariyappa and Veerabhadrayya Charantimath.

BJP's R Ashoka, who is the Leader of Opposition in the Assembly, said the results of the bypolls in the constituencies will decide the future of the ruling Congress in the State. He said that the polls were a contest between the poor and the rich.

"Since Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has said 'Make the poor win', the BJP has fielded poor candidates," he said in a press conference.

In Davanagere, the BJP has given a ticket to an ordinary person, whereas Congress has given tickets to powerful and influential people. In Bagalkot, there is a very good opinion about the BJP candidate, he added.

The Congress has given space to dynastic politics in both places. Therefore, the BJP has a strong chance of winning in both constituencies, he said. He also alleged that the Congress' minority appeasement would not work.

Union Minister Pralhad Joshi took it to the the next level, saying that economically weaker sections and young women are being targeted in what he termed a "love jihad" conspiracy in Karnataka.

The Davangere seat has a prominent minority presence.

Meanwhile, the Congress countered by attacking the Centre government over its handling of the oil crisis amid the West Asia war and said that the voters would teach the BJP a lesson.

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar said: "BJP leaders are demanding that the people-centric guarantee schemes be halted. However, we have already clarified that these are legally enacted programmes."

"The BJP has hatched a major conspiracy to somehow stop these guarantee schemes that hold the hands of the poor. The BJP's anti-people behavior is condemnable. The people will give a fitting response to this trickery," he said on Tuesday in Davangere.

He also said that "time will answer" if the State would see a new CM after the bypolls. —*Agencies*

BJP leader Simha booked for derogatory remarks

BAGALKOT, 7 APRIL

A case of violation of the Election Code of Conduct has been filed against former Mysuru BJP MP Pratap Simha for his alleged derogatory speech against CM Siddaramaiah at a meeting in Bagalkot on Monday.

According to reports, Simha made the controversial statements while addressing an election campaign meeting at Aihole on Monday.

During his speech, he allegedly criticised the Chief Minister over remarks regarding consuming meat during festivals like Ugadi and Deepavali, claiming that such statements hurt the sentiments of Hindus and were aimed at appeasing Muslims.

Bagalkot SP Siddharth Goyal stated that the remarks amount to a violation of the Model Code of Conduct, and a case has been registered at Amingad station against Simha. Officials said four cases of Model Code of Conduct violations have been reported so far in connection with the by-election in Bagalkot Assembly constituency. — *Salar News*

Centre's fuel mismanagement leading to livelihood crisis: Cong

BENGALURU, 7 APRIL

Congress on Tuesday accused the Union government of precipitating a "full-blown livelihood crisis" in Karnataka by mismanaging LPG and fuel supply, severely impacting auto drivers, small businesses and gig workers. They alleged that there was an artificial shortage of fuel.

In a joint statement, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, his Deputy DK Shivakumar and Congress General Secretary in charge of Karnataka Randeep Singh Surjewala alleged that over 5 lakh auto drivers and lakhs of small hotel owners, vendors and delivery workers were facing unprecedented hardship due to alleged administrative failure at the Centre. Already, half the auto drivers were off the roads.

"This is not just a fuel crisis. This is a livelihood emergency affecting crores of citizens," they Stated.

Auto LPG prices had surged from Rs 58-61 per litre in March to Rs 105-120 per litre within weeks, the statement said.

Amid the LPG crisis, autorickshaws stand in line outside a bunk on Mysuru Road, near New Guddadahalli, in Bengaluru, on Tuesday —*MOHAMMED ASAD*

'FULL BLOWN LIVELIHOOD CRISIS'

Key numbers according to CM, DyCM and Surjewala:

½ of the **5 lakh** auto drivers are off the road in Karnataka.

2X increase in Auto LPG prices.

60-70 LPG/CNG stations in the City were operating in March. Now barely 10-15 are operating.

The leaders pointed to an "artificial shortage" of fuel, claiming that the number of operational LPG/CNG stations in the City had dropped from 60 to 70 to barely 10 to 15, amounting to nearly an 80 per cent shutdown.

Private outlets were charging as high as Rs 125 to Rs 135 per litre, while government outlets had largely ceased operations, it added.

Daily supply had halved from 12,000 litres to 6,000 litres, with fuel being rationed at Rs 400 per vehicle, forcing drivers to queue up from early morning for hours, they claimed.

On the impact of rising commercial LPG prices, the leaders said a Rs 200 hike from 1 April had pushed the cost of a 19-kg cylinder beyond Rs 2,000, adding that after multiple increases in 45 days, prices had reached Rs 2,161 per cylinder and were reportedly being sold in the black market at Rs 6,000. This had severely affected small eateries, roadside vendors and gig workers.

"Let us be absolutely clear; LPG supply in India is controlled by the Central Government through OMCs. States have no control over procurement or allocation," they said. They alleged that despite emergency supply orders, companies appeared to be ignoring directives, indicating a governance breakdown. —*PTI*

Hundreds march for clean water

CHIKKABALLAPUR, 7 APRIL

Hundreds of people took out a huge procession on the streets of Chikkaballapur demanding tertiary treatment of water under KC Valley and HN Valley projects.

The protesters, under the aegis of Jala Jagruthi Vedhike and led by Harisha K Reddy, held placards seeking clean water in Kolar and Chikkaballapur districts.

Harisha said that the water coming from the KC Valley and HN Valley projects was not safe.

"Even after secondary treatment, the water contains certain affluents which may cause danger to underground water," he said. "The crops that are grown by using the water are being affected."

Harisha said a memorandum would be submitted to all the concerned ministers, including the Prime Minister, Water Resource Minister and the Chief Ministers of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.

Hundreds of people marched in Chikkaballapur, demanding that the water from the KC Valley and HN Valley be properly treated —*SALAR*

The Koramangala-Challaghatta (KC) Valley and Hebbal-Nagawara (HN) Valley projects pump secondary treated sewage water from Bengaluru to rejuvenate tanks and recharge groundwater in drought-prone Kolar and Chikkaballapur.

'YETTINAHOLE WATER TO ARRIVE IN A YEAR'

Chikkaballapur DC G Prabhu said that water from the Yettinahole project may reach the district in a year.

Work on the Gowribidanur gravity feeder pipeline, is nearly complete. About 81.6 km laid, ready to fill 86 tanks, he said. —*Salar News*

Lokayukta raids 8 corrupt officers in DA case

BENGALURU, 7 APRIL

Karnataka Lokayukta police on Tuesday conducted simultaneous raids on eight government officers across the state in connection with alleged disproportionate assets (DA) cases, covering more than 35 locations, including residences, offices and relatives' premises.

Searches were carried out in Mysuru, Belagavi, Mangaluru, Chitradurga, Shivamogga, Ballari, Bidar and Kodagu. Among those raided were I.K. Puttaswamy, AEE at Harangi Dam; Suresh K.L., retired Finance Controller in Bidar; Shivanna, Fisheries Department officer in Ballari; and Babu B.N., Assistant Drug Controller in Mangaluru.

Lokayukta officials said significant assets were unearthed. Susheelamma, a retired accounts assistant in Chitradurga, allegedly possessed 13 sites, six houses, a commercial complex and over 34 acres of land, with total assets exceeding Rs 8.2 crore.

Shobha KR, a Shivamogga district officer, was found with assets worth about Rs 3.88 crore.

Ajaysing Rajaput in Belagavi owned multiple houses, 12 acres of land and deposits worth over Rs 3.78 crore, while GK Revan Kumar in Mysuru allegedly held gold worth nearly Rs 3 crore. —*Salar News*

SANSKRIT CONVOCATION

Governor Thawarchand Gehlot with MP Manjunath and others during the presentation of doctorate and degree certificate at the 12th and 13th convocation of Bengaluru Sanskrit University, on Tuesday -*MOHAMMED ASAD*

Chintamani cop in mufti heckled by youth

CHINTAMANI, 7 APRIL

Close on the heels of a recent incident where a group of youths obstructed a woman police officer from performing her duties, another case of a youth threatening a police constable in plain clothes ('mufti') has been reported in Chintamani, Chikkaballapura district.

On Monday morning, Chintamani constable Sunil Kumar was on special duty monitoring illegal activities and eve-teasing near educational institutions. While riding his motorcycle, he noticed a youth, Imran, riding rashly and negligently. When Sunil advised him to drive safely, another youth, Rajesh Kumar intervened and picked a quarrel. Despite Sunil identifying himself, Rajesh reportedly grabbed a machete from a roadside tender coconut vendor and threatened the officer.

Based on Sunil's complaint and CCTV footage, police registered a case and arrested Rajesh.

On Saturday, a six-member gang had had threatened a woman Assistant Sub-Inspector during a night patrol. —*Salar News*

KSRTC THREATEN STRIKE OVER DUES

Transport, tourism sector seek loan waiver amid fuel crunch

BENGALURU, 7 APRIL

Karnataka State Travel Operators (KSTO) in a representation to Prime Minister Narendra Modi has urged him to announce immediate financial relief in view of the distress being caused by the ongoing conflict in West Asia.

In its memorandum, the KSTO sought to draw the Centre's attention to the adverse impact of disruption in international travel and trade as a result of the conflict on their businesses.

It said the disruption of international travel and trade has significantly impacted business activity. Besides, suspension of flight operations and reduced movement between countries have also resulted in a sharp decline in demand.

The association further sought a moratorium on bank loan repayment for vehicle owners, deferment of direct and indirect taxes without penalties, and temporary relaxation in Employees' State Insurance (ESI) and Provident Fund (PF) contributions as relief measures.

KSTOA also draw attention to challenges faced by operators who have invested in National Alternative Fuel vehicles in accordance with the government policy. It pointed out that due to fuel supply constraints, these operators are now struggling financially

Meanwhile, the Transport Union has threatened to go on a strike from 8 April over years of unpaid dues by the State government. We will march from Chitradurga to Freedom Park in Bengaluru, said union president Chandrashekhar. —*Agencies*

Campaigning ends in states and UTs for 9 April polls

A police officer blows a whistle, signalling party workers to halt activities as the campaign period ends for Assembly elections, in Kerala —PTI

T'PURAM/GUWAHATI/ PUDUCHERRY, 7 APRIL

The campaign for the Assembly elections in Kerala, Puducherry and Assam came ended on Tuesday.

Before falling silent at 6 pm on Tuesday, the streets in many Assembly constituencies in Kerala came alive, with supporters of different parties turning out in large numbers.

In a final show of strength, roadshows and marches filled towns, with the waving of flags, beating of drums, sloganeering, and campaigners moving in an almost dance-like rhythm, creating a colourful atmosphere.

In some places, candidates even climbed onto cranes, and waved to supporters.

The contest is mainly among three fronts, the CPI(M)-led LDF, the Congress-led UDF and the BJP-led NDA.

In Assam, voting will be held on 9 April to decide the fate of 722 candidates.

Prime Minister Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah, attacked the opposition Congress, accusing it of encouraging infiltrators to enter Assam to create a vote bank.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma upped the ante by directly attacking Bengali-speaking Muslim immigrants, derogatorily called the 'Miyas', claiming that during the last five years, "he has broken their arms and legs" and in the next five "he will break their backbones."

In Puducherry, candidates spent the day criss-crossing the UT to make their last appeals, with vehicles fluttering party flags and loudspeakers blaring campaign songs.

A total of 294 candidates are in the fray in Puducherry and Karaikal, Mahe and Yanam for 30 Assembly seats.

The NDA comprising AINRC, BJP, AIADMK and the LJK faces a challenge from INDIA comprising the Congress, DMK and the VCK. —PTI

—ANI

UP: 'Dhurandhar' inspired posters target Akhilesh

LUCKNOW/AMETHI, 7 APRIL

Posters and hoardings inspired by a Bollywood movie "Dhurandhar" targeting Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav have surfaced at several locations in Lucknow and Amethi, triggering a political row months ahead of the 2027 Assembly elections. The posters, put up outside the Amethi railway station and at various intersections, carry a slogan "Aap ko kya chahiye? Akhilesh ka Lyari raj." The reference was to Lyari, a locality in Pakistan's Karachi, once notorious for gang wars and violence and was mentioned in the Bollywood movie "Dhurandhar". The hoardings, allegedly put up by a group calling itself "Youth Against Mafia", also juxtapose alleged incidents of violence and riots during Yadav's tenure as chief minister with the current government's crackdown on mafia and criminals under CM Yogi Adityanath. Names and photographs of the organisation's office-bearers, including its executive president, general secretary and Pratapgarh in-charge, are also displayed. —PTI

Witch hunt to silence Oppn: Cong flays Himanta

DCP said that Khera's whereabouts are currently unknown

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

An Assam Police team on Tuesday reached the Delhi residence of Congress leader Pawan Khera for questioning him and carried out a search in connection with a case filed by Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma's wife over his allegations of multiple passports and undeclared assets, officials said.

The Congress hit out at Sarma, alleging that he was "disturbed and rattled" due to "imminent" defeat in the 9 April polls and was using state machinery to muzzle the opposition's voice, but the chief minister said the police will hunt down Khera from "pataal (netherworld) to question him on the "false documents" that he had used to target his family.

"Pawan Khera had dared the Assam Police to arrest him, but he has now run away to Hyderabad," Sarma told PTI Videos in Sivasagar, Assam, on the sidelines of a poll campaign meeting.

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma during an election campaign ahead of Assembly elections, in Guwahati, on Tuesday —PTI

In Delhi, the DCP said that the whereabouts of the Congress leader are currently unknown, but he will be traced.

Congress General Secretary Jairam Ramesh said the deployment of a "full army of police officials" to arrest Khera "for asking basic questions in the public interest" proves that the Assam CM is "disturbed, desperate, and rattled".

- Congress General Secretary Jairam Ramesh said the deployment of a police officials to arrest Khera over basic questions proves that the Assam CM is "disturbed, desperate, and rattled".

"This is not due process but instead a witch hunt, a bully using state machinery to muzzle and silence the voice of the Opposition that is exposing his many black deeds. Those who intimidate are the ones who are afraid and have much to hide," Ramesh said on X.

Asked about Khera's allegations against Sarma's wife, Congress Chief Mallkarjun Kharge, who is campaigning in Assam, said all agencies are under the central government, which should probe the charges. —PTI

NEARLY 91 LAKH PEOPLE

Matua, minority voters deleted in post-SIR rolls: Didi

KOLKATA, 7 APRIL

West Bengal Chief Minister **Mamata Banerjee** on Tuesday alleged that names of people belonging to the Matua and minority communities were deleted from the post-SIR voter rolls in the state.

Addressing a rally at Chakdaha in Nadia district, Banerjee said that the TMC will stand by those whose names were excluded from the voter rolls, following the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise.

According to the latest Election Commission data, nearly 91 lakh voters have been deleted from the electoral rolls in West Bengal after the SIR process.

"Why this discrimination? You are excluding Matuas, Rajbanshis and minorities. Do you think that people do not understand this?" the CM said.

She also claimed that in districts with significant minority population such as Murshidabad, Malda and North Dinajpur, names were "picked and removed like lice" from the electoral rolls.

'INFILTRATORS WILL BE SENT BACK'

Meanwhile, addressing an election rally in Assam's Patharkandi/Hailakandi falling in the Bengali-dominated Barak Valley, Union Home Minister Amit Shah asserted that a 'parivartan' is inevitable in West Bengal.

He said once the BJP comes to power in the state, all infiltrators will be sent back to their countries. —PTI

—ANI

Govt prioritises women's empowerment: PM

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

Prime Minister Narendra Modi affirmed that his government has consistently prioritised women's empowerment and highlighted the Women's Reservation Act as a step towards greater women-led governance. He responded to a newspaper article by Union Minister Annpurna Devi on strengthening women's legislative leadership, emphasising that "Representation must translate into real influence." Modi said, "The government has always prioritised Nari Shakti in every form, and with the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, India is moving towards greater women-led governance." The law, passed in 2023, reserves 33 per cent seats for women in Lok Sabha and assemblies. Implementation awaits delimitation, and Parliament may amend the law further to enable earlier activation, with Modi urging political support for women's empowerment. —PTI

No exit polls from 9 to 29 April: EC

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

Exit polls can neither be held nor their results disseminated from 7am on 9 April till 6.30pm on 29 April for the five assembly elections taking place this month, the Election Commission said.

It has also cautioned that conducting or broadcasting exit polls in the period violates Section 126A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, and is "punishable with imprisonment up to a period of two years, or with fine or both."

While Kerala, Assam and Puducherry are going for Assembly polls on 9 April, the electoral exercise will be held in Tamil Nadu on 23 April.

In West Bengal, state polls will be held on 23 and 29 April.

While the 48 hours 'silence period' in Kerala and Puducherry will commence at 6pm on Tuesday, it will kick in at 5pm in Assam.

Silence period means the end of campaigning 48 hours ahead of the end of voting hours in a particular constituency or state.

- Except door-to-door campaigning by a limited number of party workers or candidates, no other form of campaigning is allowed. But in a digital age, it is difficult to enforce.

Except door-to-door campaigning by a limited number of party workers or candidates, no other form of campaigning is allowed. But in a digital age, it is difficult to enforce.

Usually voting is held from 7am to 6pm. But the timing varies due to terrain and security situation. —PTI

'Fadnavis linked Madurai Metro to votes'

CHENNAI/PUDUCHERRY, 7 APRIL

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin on Tuesday launched a scathing attack on Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, accusing him of attempting to blackmail voters by linking the sanctioning of the Madurai Metro project to the election of a BJP legislator.

"Is it the job of the Maharashtra Chief Minister to bargain and blackmail, saying that Metro will be provided to Madurai only if a BJP MLA is elected?" Stalin posted on his official X account. Reacting to reported remarks that a Metro for Madurai would only be possible if a BJP MLA were elected, Stalin asked if it was the job of the Maharashtra chief minister to bargain and blackmail in such a manner.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and DMK President MK Stalin during an election campaign ahead of assembly elections, in Mayiladuthurai, Tamil Nadu —PTI

VIJAY'S NOMINATION ACCEPTED

Separately, TVK chief Vijay's nomination for the Perambur and Tiruchirappalli Assembly constituencies for the 23 April polls was accepted after scrutiny.

The Returning Officer dismissed PMK members' objections in Perambur seeking rejection of Vijay's affidavit over allegations of unpaid property taxes.

'BJP WANTS TO CONTROL UT'

Meanwhile, in Puducherry Tamil Nadu Deputy Chief Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin claimed that the BJP wanted to take full control of the Union Territory just as it wanted to gain control of Tamil Nadu through Edappadi K Palaniswami-led AIADMK. —PTI

BJP slams Kharge's 'illiterate Gujarat' remark

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

The BJP on Tuesday demanded an apology from Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge for his alleged remarks regarding the people of Gujarat and some other states being 'illiterate', saying that the comment was "shameless, demeaning and utterly despicable."

Addressing a press conference here, senior BJP leader and former Union minister Ravi Shankar Prasad asked Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi, Sonia Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra to clarify whether they agreed with Kharge's statement.

At an election rally in Kerala's Idukki district on Sunday, Kharge had said the people of the state were "educated and clever" and cannot be misled, unlike those who were "illiterate" in Gujarat and some other places.

The former Union minister further said Kharge "does not deserve to remain Congress president" for making such comments, and questioned if he had "abandoned all sense of dignity" associated with the post. —PTI

Congress has right to contest in Baramati: Supriya

MUMBAI, 7 APRIL

A day after NCP leader Parth Pawar hit out at the Congress for fielding a candidate in the Baramati Assembly by-poll, NCP (SP) MP Supriya Sule said contesting elections is a constitutional right, and the Congress deserves respect.

Sule also said that she and NCP (SP) president Sharad Pawar had been invited by NCP leaders to remain present when Parth's mother Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Sunetra Pawar filed her nomination for the by-election on Monday. Parth said on Monday that the Congress would "suffer" for fielding a candidate against Sunetra, which drew a rare public rebuke for him from NCP (SP) Chief Sharad who questioned the "political maturity" of his grandnephew. The April 23 by-election was necessitated by the death of former DyCM husband Ajit Pawar in an air crash on 28 January.

Meanwhile, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis hoped that the Congress will honour "public sentiment" and ensure an unopposed election in Baramati Assembly constituency by withdrawing its candidate against Sunetra. —PTI

—KERALA/EC

Kerala CEO's viral video promotes voting awareness

T'PURAM, 7 APRIL

Kerala's Chief Electoral Officer Rathan U Kelkar's dance video has gone viral on social media, aiming to motivate young voters for 9 April Assembly elections. Launched by Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, the 1.33-minute clip shows Kelkar dancing on the seashore with election officials including Thiruvananthapuram District Collector Anu Kumari and Assistant Collector Dr Sivasakthivel. The video features rhythmic lyrics encouraging voting, such as "This is your vote and our state needs your vote... one goal can change the game, and one vote can alter the fate." The Election Commission also introduced initiatives like free 'halwa' for first-time voters in Kerala. Uber and SupplyCo are offering incentives to boost voter participation. —PTI

10 STATES & 3 UT COVERED

EC may start SIR in remaining 22 states, UTs post elections

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

The Election Commission (EC) may roll out the third and final phase of special intensive revision of voters' list in the remaining 22 states and Union territories, including Delhi, after the polls to five assemblies this month, officials said.

Assembly elections are taking place in Kerala, Assam, Puducherry, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal this month and counting will take place on 4 May.

The officials said special intensive revision (SIR) could be rolled out after the polls conclude on 29 April. Another possibility is to begin the massive exercise after the declaration of results.

So far, SIR has been carried out in 10 states and three Union territories. A 'special revision' of electoral rolls was carried out in Assam.

Assembly elections are taking place in Kerala, Assam, Puducherry, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal this month —PTI

Except for Uttar Pradesh, final voters' lists have been published where SIR was carried out. As many as 60 crore of the nearly 99 crore voters have been covered in these voters' list clean up exercises.

The remaining nearly 39 crore electors will be covered in the proposed exercise in 17 states and five Union territories.

On 19 February, the poll authority had asked 22 states and Union territories including Delhi to complete preparatory work related to SIR at the earliest as the exercise is "expected to start from April". —PTI

Punjab's ex-Cong chief Navjot Kaur launches new party

CHANDIGARH, 7 APRIL

Two months after she was expelled from Punjab Congress, former MLA **Navjot Kaur Sidhu** has announced the launch of a new political outfit —Bharatiya Rashtrawadi Party.

Kaur, wife of ex-cricketer and former Punjab Congress chief Navjot Singh Sidhu, announced this on microblogging site X late on Monday night.

Punjab Congress had suspended Kaur for sparking a political row with her "Rs 500 crore for chief minister's chair" remark.

In an X post on Monday night, Kaur dubbed her move a "much-awaited announcement."

She shared a picture of her along with another person with the party banner -- Bharatiya Rashtrawadi Party — in the background.

"...We have been working on a new alternative at a national level after carefully monitoring and reviewing the current standards of performance of political leaders," Kaur's post read.

- Kaur, wife of ex-cricketer and former Punjab Congress chief Navjot Singh Sidhu, announced this on microblogging site X late on Monday night.

Kaur further said she will lead Punjab to achieve its long-lost glory of being a Golden State, "where people just know about the power of love, sharing, justice, right of liberty, freedom and working with a purpose of selfless service and spiritual growth to attain their goal, values and vision without any outside interference." —PTI

—X/INDIASL

30 Indian fishers return home from Sri Lanka

COLOMBO, 7 APRIL

At least 30 Indian fishermen were repatriated from Sri Lanka on Tuesday and are currently on their way back home, authorities said. "30 Indian fishermen were repatriated from Sri Lanka today and are on their way home," the Indian High Commission here said in a post on X. According to the Sri Lanka Navy, till April 2026, 15 trawlers and 102 Indian fishermen have been arrested by the Navy. In 2025, some 346 fishermen had been arrested in 44 trawlers while poaching in Sri Lankan waters, the Navy said. "It depends on the court procedure," spokesman Commander Buddika Sampath added. —*PTI*

—INSTAGRAM

Kerala HC bins plea against 'Kaalam Paranja Kadha'

KOCHI, 7 APRIL

The Kerala High Court on Tuesday dismissed the plea by the father of an accused in the Venjaramoodu mass murder case to restrain the release of a film which he claimed was based on the incident. Justice Bechu Kurian Thomas rejected the plea of Abdal Rahim, father of A R Afan, who was arrested for allegedly murdering his relatives at Venjaramoodu in Thiruvananthapuram on 24 February, 2025. The detailed order is awaited. Rahim had moved the High Court against the release of the movie 'Kaalam Paranja Kadha', claiming it would result in a media trial, influence witnesses and affect the accused's right to a fair trial. —*PTI*

—ANI

HC bans judges from using AI for writing orders

CHANDIGARH, 7 APRIL

The Punjab and Haryana High Court has asked judicial officers not to use AI tools such as ChatGPT, Gemini and Copilot to write judgments and conduct legal research. A letter issued by the registrar-general stated that the Chief Justice has asked them "to direct the judicial officers working under your control not to use Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, including but not limited to ChatGPT, Gemini, Copilot, Meta, et cetera, for writing of judgments and legal research. Any violation of these instructions will be viewed seriously." Earlier, the Gujarat High Court had prohibited AI use in decision-making, while stating it should improve speed and quality of justice delivery. —*PTI*

Aus shorebird spotted 7,400km away in Andamans

LATUR, 7 APRIL

A tagged shorebird that flew more than 7,400km from South Australia has been spotted on Narcondam Island in the Andaman and Nicobar archipelago, an expert said. The bird, a Sanderling, was photographed by G Thikanna during a posting on the island. Mumbai-based ornithologist Dr Raju Kasambe said it travelled 7,472km from its tagging site in Australia. The bird was tagged on 13 April, 2025, by Maureen Christie at Brown Bay and reached Narcondam Island two months later. The sighting highlights the migratory route and marks the first recorded re-sighting of a tagged bird on the island. —*PTI*

Rajnath warns Pakistan of decisive action

On Pak threat to hit Kolkata, Rajnath says let them 'try it'

Union Defense Minister Rajnath Singh, West Bengal BJP President Samik Bhattacharya and others during a public meeting, ahead of the WB Assembly elections, at Barrackpore, in North 24 Parganas district —*PTI*

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

Defence minister Rajnath Singh responded to his Pakistani counterpart's threat of hitting West Bengal's Kolkata with a stern warning, and a reminder of what happened 55 years ago.

Pakistan's defence minister Khwaja Asif had warned on Saturday that his country would attack India's eastern metropolis of Kolkata if India attempted any "false flag operations."

The comments came days after Rajnath warned India's "neighbours" against "misadventures."

Asked about Asif's remarks on Tuesday at a public rally in West Bengal, Rajnath Singh asked Pakistan's defence minister to refrain from making such provocative statements, given the consequences they suffered in the 1971 war.

The 1971 India-Pakistan war was a major military conflict between the countries that led to the creation of Bangladesh.

"Fifty-five years ago, they suffered the consequences when Pakistan was divided into two. If they try to cast an eye on Bengal, only god knows how many parts Pakistan will be divided into this time," said Rajnath Singh.

Speaking to reporters in his hometown Sialkot, Asif had said, "If India tries to stage any false flag operation this time, then God willing, we will take it to Kolkata," PTI had reported. "If India plans a false-flag operation using their own men or through Pakistani people in their detention by planting bodies somewhere and claiming they were terrorists who had done so and so, Pakistan will take it to Kolkata," he added.

Last week, Rajnath warned of decisive action against Pakistan in the event of any "misadventure."

"Our neighbour may commit misadventures. If it does so, India's response will be decisive this time, defence minister Rajnath Singh said, without taking any name, and added that Operation Sindoor is not over. — *Agencies*

The Moirang Police Station which was set afire on Tuesday during a protest against the kiling of two children in Manipur's Bishnupur district —*PTI*

2 children killed in Manipur bomb attack

IMPHAL, 7 APRIL

- The incident occurred at around 1 am when a bomb was hurled by suspected militants at a house in the Moirang Tronglaobi area, killing a 5-year-old boy and a six-month-old girl

Two children were killed and their mother was injured in a bomb attack in Manipur's Bishnupur district on Tuesday, triggering protests, police said.

The incident occurred at around 1 am when a bomb was hurled by suspected militants at a house in Moirang Tronglaobi area, killing a 5-year-old boy and a six-month-old girl, a senior officer said.

Chief Minister Y Khemchand Singh described the attack as a "barbaric act" and assured people that those responsible would be dealt with firmly.

The two children and their mother were sleeping in their bedroom when the bomb exploded in the house, the police officer said.

Locals staged a protest this morning and torched two oil tankers and a truck near a petrol pump in the area. They burnt tyres in front of the Moirang Police Station and destroyed a makeshift police outpost.

Security forces have been deployed in the area to control the situation, the officer said.

People also burnt tyres in different parts of Imphal to protest the killing of the two minors.

The CM visited a private hospital in Imphal, where the injured mother of the two dead kids was being treated.

At least four people were injured in firing when a mob stormed a security forces camp in Manipur's Bishnupur district on Tuesday, officials said.

The firing occurred after a large number of protesters stormed a Central police camp, located 200 metres from Tronglaobi, and vandalised it, they said. Protesters also set several vehicles parked inside the camp on fire. — *PTI*

Woman writing book on Shah Bano case alleges assault

INDORE, 7 APRIL

A woman claiming to be an author has alleged that a mob had assaulted her two months ago suspecting that she was a "child lifter" when she visited Indore to meet the family of Shah Bano Begum as part of a project to write a book on the famous legal case involving her. Police, however, have denied any attack on the woman.

In a video circulating on social media on Monday, the woman can be heard saying that she came in February to meet the family of the late Shah Bano, whose long battle for maintenance after a divorce resulted in a famous Supreme Court ruling, to write a book on the case.

The woman, who says outside Indore, claimed that Shah Bano's family made "unrealistic demands" for money from her in connection with the proposed book contract, and got into an altercation with her when she objected.

She alleged that during the dispute, a man accused her of being a "child lifter," following which a crowd that had gathered at the spot in the Khajrana area beat her up.

Manoj Singh Sendhav, the in-charge of the Khajrana police station, termed the allegations regarding the mob assault as "false."

Additional DCP Rajesh Dandotiya claimed that during the dispute, the woman was accused of "data theft," which people present at the scene mistook for "beta chori" (stealing a son). — *PTI*

In SC, Centre backs ban on women's Sabarimala entry

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

Backing the restriction on the entry of women of menstruating age into Kerala's Sabarimala temple, the Centre told the Supreme Court on Tuesday that the issue falls squarely within the domain of religious faith and denominational autonomy, and is beyond the scope of judicial review.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, told a nine-judge Constitution bench headed by Chief Justice Surya Kant that if there is something unscientific, the remedy is with the legislature.

"We have to respect all religions; everything is not about dignity or freedom. If I go to a mazar or a gurudwara and if I have to cover my head, I can't say my dignity, right or choice is taken away," Mehta told the bench comprising Justices BV Nagarathna, MM Sundresh, Ahsanuddin Amanullah, Aravind Kumar, Augustine George Masih, Prasanna B Varale, R Mahadevan and Joymalya Bagchi.

Mehta said if someone claims that human sacrifice is an essential religious practice and approaches the court under Article 32 of the Constitution, then the court need not examine whether it is religious or essential, and can reject it as it violates morality.

"The Constitution protects religious freedom precisely because the protected field contains convictions, rituals, disciplines, and forms of worship that may not satisfy secular standards of reason, utility or majoritarian taste," Mehta said. — *PTI*

'Problems with police station CCTVs to be solved soon'

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

The Centre told the Supreme Court on Tuesday that all issues concerning installation of CCTVs in police stations across the country would be sorted out within two weeks.

Attorney General R Venkataramani told Justices Vikram Nath and Mehta that he was taking stock of the issue.

The Union Home Secretary also appeared in court as per the SC's 6 April order so that assistance could be drawn from him in implementing the scheme for installing CCTVs in police stations. — *PTI*

Only CJI can deal with urgent matters: SC

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

The SC said that "exceptionally urgent matters" that cannot wait for the listing process must be mentioned only before the CJI, even if he is busy presiding over a constitution bench. As per practice, urgent matters are mentioned for listing and hearing before the senior most judge of the SC if the CJI is unavailable.

In a circular issued on 6 April, the SC said, "Mentioning of exceptionally urgent matters, which cannot await listing as per circular dated 29 November 2025, is permitted before court No 1, even when the CJI is presiding over a constitution bench." — *PTI*

J&K COPS BUST LET MODULE, NAB TERRORIST ON RUN FOR 16 YEARS

SRINAGAR, 7 APRIL

Jammu and Kashmir police has busted an interstate Lashkar-e-Taiba terror module and arrested five people, including Abdullah, alias Abu Hureira, who has been on the run for 16 years and was able to set up bases outside the UT, officials said on Tuesday.

Besides Abdullah, another Pakistani terrorist, Usman alias Khubaib, was also arrested in the operation that involved the J&K as well as Central agencies, they said.

Investigators searched 19 locations in J&K, Rajasthan and Haryana, and recovered incriminating material. The probe unearthed a deep-rooted LeT network involved in providing logistics and financial support to terrorists.

Giving details, the officials said three Srinagar residents were among the five caught. Mohammad Naqeeb Bhat, Adil Rashid Bhat and Ghulam Mohammad Mir alias Mama were arrested for allegedly providing logistical support, including shelter and food to the terrorists, they said.

The officials said the probe indicates that a foreign terrorist managed to travel outside the country using forged documents and identity with the help of the Lashkar-e-Taiba network in other states. — *PTI*

Man killed over a single run in Vizag cricket match

VISAKHAPATNAM, 7 APRIL

A man was allegedly murdered over a dispute involving a single run during a cricket match between two teams here, a police official said on Tuesday. Police said an argument broke out between players over a run during the match on Sunday, which was initially resolved when the umpire intervened.

Later, the accused K Kishore, 26, attacked Ajit, 23, the brother of the umpire, and stabbed him in the chest following another altercation over the same issue. Kishore, a photographer, had earlier argued with the umpire over the disputed run before tensions briefly subsided, police said.

However, when the two sides encountered each other again later in the day, the argument escalated into a fight. — *PTI*

ED attaches Rs 39 cr of Al Falah chairman

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

The Enforcement Directorate has attached a house in Delhi's Jamia Nagar, agricultural land in Faridabad, and several bank deposits, worth more than Rs 39 crore all told, as part of a money laundering probe against Al Falah Group chairman Jawad Ahmad Siddiqui, sources said on Tuesday.

A provisional attachment order has been issued by the federal probe agency to freeze these properties under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

The assets include a house in Delhi's Jamia Nagar, agricultural land in the Dhauj area of Faridabad, and money stashed in some bank accounts and fixed deposits.

Sources told PTI that the total value of these assets is Rs 39.45 crore.

Siddiqui, 61, is currently lodged in jail.

The latest action against him came as part of a money laundering case linked to the alleged cheating of students of his educational institutions by misrepresenting facts regarding the accreditation and recognition of his institutions.

Al Falah University, based in Haryana's Faridabad, came under the scanner of probe agencies during an investigation into a 'white-collar' terror module linked to the 10 November, 2025, New Delhi Red Fort area blast in which 15 people were killed.

Siddiqui was arrested last year by the Enforcement Directorate, which had earlier attached the land and building of the varsity worth about Rs 140 crore. —*PTI*

DEFENCE TECH

Material dvpt cycle too long, says DRDO chief

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

The biggest challenge in material development domain is that its cycle takes 10 to 15 years, while the system development cycle is "continuously shrinking," Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) chief Samir V Kamat said on Tuesday.

And, unless the material development cycle "keeps pace" with the system development cycle, getting any new material in will become "a greater and greater challenge," he said in his address at a defence seminar hosted at Subroto Park here.

"Materials are key enablers, whether for systems, weapons, or sensors. If you want capabilities beyond what you currently have, you must develop materials that can provide that capability," the DRDO chairman said.

DRDO chief Samir V Kamat —*PTI*

He cautioned India against depending on foreign countries for material development technology.

"You are not going to get it. They will give you the technology only after they have used it in their systems. And, when they move to the next generation technologies, they give you the various components of technology needed for making your systems," Kamat said.

"So if you want to become self-sufficient, this is one area that the country needs to focus on," he asserted. In his address, the DRDO chief underlined various challenges the material development sector faces in the country, from investment to scalability.

"But the biggest challenge we have today is that the material development cycle is 10 to 15 years. If you see, the system development cycle is continuously shrinking. Today, new systems arrive every five years and in areas like drones, things change every couple of years or every year," he said. So, unless the material development cycle keeps pace with the system development cycle, "getting any new material in is becoming a greater and greater challenge," the DRDO chief added.

He said the materials community has attempted to shorten the materials development cycle, using integrated computational materials engineering and AI/ML tools. — *PTI*

NCB denies Malik's hand in Wankhede probe

MUMBAI, 7 APRIL

The Narcotic Control Bureau (NCB) informed the Bombay High Court that its enquiry into alleged irregularities by former Zonal Director Sameer Wankhede was initiated based on "non-anonymous" complaints, not at the behest of NCP leader Nawab Malik.

In an affidavit filed by Vishal Sanap, Deputy Director General (South West Region), the agency stated that the investigation was based on two complaints, asserting, "It is pertinent to note that neither of the said complaints had been lodged by Nawab Malik, nor were they initiated pursuant to any communication emanating from him."

Wankhede had challenged the probe into his handling of drug cases, including the Sushant Singh Rajput death case, claiming it was politically driven.

He alleged Malik held a grudge against him after Wankhede arrested Malik's son-in-law, Sameer Khan, in a drugs case.

The NCB clarified that it has the right to verify complaints. Wankhede's counsel sought time for examination, and the court scheduled the hearing after two weeks. —*PTI*

A WAR THAT NO ONE WANTS

Around two dozen protesters gathered outside the US embassy in Tel Aviv to demand a ceasefire and an end to the US-Israel war with Iran and Lebanon, warning of rising violence and accusing the government of failing to ease regional tensions. Police ordered the group to disperse within minutes as confrontations broke out with members of the public. Earlier demonstrations at Habima Square saw police use force and arrest at least 13 people. Despite this dissent, public support for the war remains high at 78 per cent, with opposition at around 11.5 per cent, according to Israel Democracy Institute —PTI

Women voters rise in Assam but candidates remain few

Women account for nearly half of the electorate in Assam, yet their presence in the political arena remains strikingly limited, with only 8.17 per cent of candidates in the upcoming Assembly elections being female. The disparity has once again highlighted the gap between political rhetoric and actual representation.

According to official figures, women constitute 49.98 per cent of the electoral roll in the state and even outnumber men in 16 of Assam's 35 districts. Despite this, only 59 women are contesting the 126-member Assembly election scheduled for April 9, down from 74 in the 2021 polls.

The contrast is visible on the ground. Women, often dressed in vibrant traditional handloom attire, form a significant presence at campaign rallies and political meetings. Parties have made a slew of promises aimed at attracting women voters, yet activists argue that these commitments rarely translate into meaningful ticket allocation.

Parties have made a slew of promises aimed at attracting women voters, yet activists argue that these commitments rarely translate into meaningful ticket allocation —PTI

Among political parties, the opposition Indian National Congress has fielded the highest number of women candidates at 14. The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party has nominated seven women, while its ally, the Bodo Peoples' Front (BPF), has fielded just one. The Asom Gana Parishad (AGP), another NDA partner, has not nominated any women. Other parties such as the AIUDF have fielded two women candidates, while the United Peoples' Party Liberal (UPPL), Raijor Dal, and Assam Jatiya Parishad (AJP) have nominated one each. The remaining women candidates are independents.

The issue has drawn attention at the national level as well. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, during campaign rallies, acknowledged the need for greater representation of women in legislative bodies. He reiterated the promise of implementing 33 per cent reservation for women starting from the 2029 Lok Sabha elections and urged women voters to push for political consensus on the Bill in the upcoming special session of Parliament beginning April 16.

The BJP has defended its candidate selection process, stating that tickets were awarded based on merit and grassroots work. However, women's groups and activists remain unconvinced, arguing that political parties have consistently failed to honour their commitments to ensure adequate representation.

Prominent women candidates include minister Ajanta Neog, contesting from Golaghat for the sixth consecutive term. Another outgoing minister, Nandita Garlosa, was denied a BJP ticket and subsequently joined the Congress to contest from Haflong (ST).

The Congress has fielded a mix of experienced and new faces, including former minister Pranati Phukan, sitting MLA Nandita Das, former legislator Roselina Tirkey, and state Mahila Morcha president Mira Borthakur Goswami. Among first-time candidates drawing attention are AJP's Kunki Chowdhury from Guwahati Central and Raijor Dal's Gyanshree Bora from Mariani.

Chowdhury, 27, has emerged as a notable figure, attracting strong support from Gen Z voters as well as sections of Assamese and Bengali communities. Her candidature has reportedly unsettled her BJP opponent, Vijay Gupta, with even senior leaders weighing in during the campaign.

Despite their limited representation as candidates, women voters have become a decisive electoral force. Political parties have rolled out numerous welfare schemes and promises to secure their support. The BJP highlighted initiatives such as financial assistance to 40 lakh women under the Orunodoi scheme, monetary support for students under the Nijut Moina scheme, and claims of social improvements including a decline in child marriage rates.

Its manifesto further promises to enhance financial assistance, provide legal aid to victims of polygamy, establish hostels for women, and set up dedicated women's markets.

The Congress, however, has criticised the BJP, accusing it of creating a "vote bank" of women beneficiaries using public funds. It has countered with its own assurances, including unconditional monthly cash transfers to women and financial support of 50,000 for those seeking to start or expand businesses.

Activists argue that these measures, while significant, do not address the core issue of political representation. "We celebrate women as voters, emphasising their increasing turnout, but there is no investment in building capacities for women to contest elections," said gender activist Anurita Pathak Hazarika.

She stressed that empowering women at the grassroots level and strengthening their participation in governance is essential to achieving meaningful representation in leadership roles.

As Assam heads to the polls, the numbers present a stark reality: while women are nearly equal stakeholders in the democratic process as voters, their voice in the corridors of power remains disproportionately small. —PTI

SALAR سالار

Two women in fray to become next UN Chief

- Vying for the top job at the UN are Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and former Vice president of Costa Rica Rebeca Grynspan, and former Chilean president and United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet.

Two women leaders are in the fray to become the next Secretary General of the UN, nominated along with two male candidates, amid a growing call for the first female to be elected as head of the global organisation in its 80-year-old history.

The process to elect the next Secretary General of the United Nations gets underway this month with the four nominated candidates for the post participating in interactive dialogues scheduled to be held at the UN Headquarters on 21 and 22 April.

UN Chief Antonio Guterres, the former prime minister of Portugal and former United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, will complete his second five-year term as head of the global organisation in December 2026.

He had assumed office in 2017 as the ninth Secretary General of the UN, an organisation that has never seen a female leader at its helm in 80 years of its existence.

Vying for the top job at the UN are former Chilean president and United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet, Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and former Vice President of Costa Rica Rebeca Grynspan, head of the International Atomic Energy Agency Rafael Grossi and former President of Senegal Macky Sall.

Bachelet has been nominated by Brazil and Mexico, while Grynspan has been nominated by Costa Rica, Grossi by Argentina and Sall by Burundi.

The office of the President of the UN General Assembly, Annalena Baerbock, said Monday that the interactive dialogue comprising three-hour sessions for each candidate will take place on 21 and 22 April.

The Secretary-General is appointed by the 193-member General Assembly "upon the recommendation of the Security Council", the powerful but divided 15-nation body where China, France, Russia, UK and the US sit as permanent members and have veto powers.

A UN General Assembly resolution adopted in September last year had noted "with regret" that no woman has ever held the position of Secretary-General and had encouraged Member States to "strongly consider nominating women as candidates" for the top post.

Several advocacy and rights groups have called for electing a woman as the next UN Secretary General, calling on Member States to support "only" women candidates and to ensure a transparent, inclusive process.

"We believe that appointing a woman leader with a proven commitment to gender equality, human rights, and multilateralism is not just a symbolic step—it is a necessary one for the UN's legitimacy, effectiveness, and future," Woman SG, a campaign to elect a female UN Secretary General, said.

1 for 8 billion, a global movement campaigning for an inclusive process to appoint the first woman UN Secretary-General, said the appointment of the next UN chief must be geared towards finding the candidate best able to rise to this challenge.

"That means giving all governments and people a chance to shape the process; not only the most powerful...And it means making history by appointing a woman to lead the 80-year-old institution."

"The UN's normative power is waning, and historical injustice can no longer be tolerated - we need a feminist woman leader who reflects the future we want and the UN we need to get there." —PTI

LETTERS

write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

UP residents hunt for kerosene stoves, lanterns amid LPG crisis

A shortage of LPG cylinders over the past few weeks has forced residents in Bareilly to scramble for old kerosene stoves and lanterns, many of which have long disappeared from households as fuel use patterns changed.

With the government directing ration shops to supply kerosene for cooking and lighting amid the LPG cylinder crunch, people have begun searching their homes, neighbours' houses and local markets for stoves and lanterns that were once common but are now hard to find.

Locals said that with improved LPG access under schemes such as the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana and better electricity supply over the past decade, dependence on kerosene had sharply declined, leading to stoves and lanterns falling out of use.

Additional District Magistrate (Finance and Revenue) Santosh Kumar Singh said kerosene distribution through the public distribution system was not stopped abruptly but phased out between 2015 and 2018 as LPG connections and electrification expanded across Uttar Pradesh.

However, the recent LPG shortage has reversed the trend, with households resorting to traditional methods.

A woman prepares cows dung cakes for sale amid the ongoing LPG crisis in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh —PTI

Some have even turned to earthen chulhas, while electric induction cooktops have also seen increased use.

"People are now searching through scrap at home and asking neighbours if they have a stove to lend for a few days," a local resident said.

Dr Vandana Sharma, a senior professor at Bareilly College, said she had been trying to find a kerosene stove in the market for the last two days.

"It is not available at any price. Shopkeepers are asking for a week to get the stock. There was a time when two stoves were used in every household. Now, they have vanished," she said.

In rural areas, the situation is similar. Satendra Singh Chauhan from Bhuta block said lanterns were once a staple in every home.

"Earlier, there used to be three lanterns in a house — in the courtyard, inside the room and at the entrance. Now, not a single household in our village has one," he said.

Dr Archana Singh said the shift has also created a generational disconnect.

"Many students today do not even know what a kerosene stove is," she said, adding that such stoves became popular globally in the late 19th century and were widely used in India through the 20th century.

Residents said the sudden spike in demand has made both new and used stoves scarce.

Rajveer Singh Gurjar, a milk seller from Pashupatinath Colony, said he was trying to arrange lanterns for his village home, where the electricity supply remains erratic.

"The shopkeeper asked me to come after two days as he has to look in the warehouse," he said.

Navratna Lal Gaur from Faridpur said he had located a stove but was unable to find a pump washer in the market.

"I will arrange it somehow and send it home along with kerosene once it is available," he said.

Haseen Miyan from Aijaz Nagar Gotia said he had visited several shops but could not find a stove, new or old.

Local mechanic Zafar in Jagatpur said demand for stoves has surged.

"We have called a craftsman. The stove can be made, but parts like burners are difficult to source," he said.

Hari Shankar, a computer operator, said, "My children do not even know what a stove is." At Bareilly Junction, tea vendor Hoshiyar Singh Pal said the shortage of commercial LPG cylinders has affected small businesses.

"We have been searching for cylinders for the last two days. If we don't get one, we will start making tea on a coal-fired stove," he said.

Earlier, amid the ongoing conflict in West Asia, the Uttar Pradesh government had cautioned people against LPG shortage rumours and directed officials to ensure adequate supply.

In a statement on Monday night, the government said it has conducted 17,581 raids and inspections across the state since March 12 to curb black marketing and ensure the smooth supply of LPG and petroleum products.

During this period, 33 FIRs were registered against LPG distributors, and 189 FIRs were registered in other cases, leading to the arrest of 17 people. Additionally, prosecution proceedings were initiated against 224 people, it said.

Following directives from the chief secretary, district administrations across the state are actively monitoring the situation.

District supply officers and local administrative officials are conducting regular inspections to ensure the timely availability of gas cylinders and fuel to consumers, the statement said.PTI —PTI

– FREEPIK

China hikes fuel prices; Lanka offers subsidies

BEIJING, COLOMBO, 7 APRIL

China announced an increase in gasoline and diesel prices for the second time in about a fortnight. The prices of gasoline and diesel will increase by 420 yuan (USD 61) and 400 yuan (USD 58) per tonne, respectively, the government said. China reportedly has about four months of emergency reserves of oil. Meanwhile, Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake announced an economic relief package. "We will grant a concession of LKR 100 per litre for diesel and LKR 20 per litre for petrol," Dissanayake said, adding that it will cost the government LKR 20 billion per month. India will also provide Lanka with fuel, Dissanayake told the Parliament. Sri Lanka had hiked fuel prices earlier. —*PTI*

B'desh first woman Speaker Chaudhury arrested

DHAKA, 7 APRIL

Bangladesh's former speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury was on Tuesday arrested by the Dhaka Metropolitan Police, according to media reports. Chaudhury, the country's first woman speaker was detained by the Detective Branch in connection with a case filed at Lalbagh police station over incidents of violence and vandalism during the mass uprising. She had allegedly been in hiding at various locations and was staying at a relative's residence in Dhanmondi before being arrested. "As far as we know, cases have been filed against her over incidents during the July movement," said Deputy Commissioner M N Nasir Uddin. She is currently being interrogated, and further steps will be announced later, officials said on Tuesday. —*PTI*

To Lam reelected as Vietnamese President

HANOI, 7 APRIL

Vietnam's National Assembly unanimously elected To Lam as President for a five-year term, reinforcing his control over both the Communist Party and the state. This move departs from tradition, aligning Vietnam's leadership structure with China's under Xi Jinping and Laos, where power is concentrated. Addressing the Assembly, Lam emphasised maintaining peace and stability as foundations for sustainable growth. This marks Lam's second tenure holding both the Presidency as well as the Communist Party's General Secretary position. Experts note that the consolidation of power grants him a stronger mandate to pursue reforms but risks moving faster than institutional capacity allows. Lam has overseen major reforms, focusing on economic growth, infrastructure, and moving Vietnam beyond a labour-driven model. —*PTI*

Taiwan oppn leader visits China 'for peace'

TAIPEI, 7 APRIL

Taiwan opposition leader Cheng Li-wun is heading to China on Tuesday at the invitation of President Xi Jinping, in what she's calling a "journey for peace" as Beijing pushes for the self-ruled island to come under its control. The visit is the first by a Taiwanese opposition leader in a decade and comes ahead of a meeting in Beijing between Xi and US President Donald Trump scheduled to take place in May. "The purpose of this visit to mainland China is precisely to show the world that it is not just Taiwan that unilaterally hopes for peace," Cheng said. China claims the island as its territory and has not ruled out force to take it. —*PTI*

Iran asks citizens to form human chains near power plants

US-Israeli airstrike on the Mahshahr petrochemical complex, one of the largest in in Iran, earlier this week —*x*

Tehran on edge as Trump's deadline looms

DUBAI, 7 APRIL

Iranian officials urged young people to form human chains to protect power plants as US President Donald Trump's deadline neared.

Trump has extended previous deadlines but suggested the one set for 8pm EST on Tuesday (6.30am IST on Wednesday) for Iran to reopen the Strait of Hormuz or face "hell" was final. He threatened to destroy all of Iran's power plants and bridges so that they can "never to be used again", even though it might be a war crime.

In response, Iran called on "all young people, athletes, artists, students, university students and their professors" to form human chains around power plants.

"Power plants that are our national assets and capital," Alireza Rahimi, identified by Iranian state television as the secretary of the Supreme Council of Youth and Adolescents, said in a video statement. Iranians have formed human chains in the past around nuclear sites at times of heightened tensions with the West.

Iranian composer Ali Ghamsari performs in front of a power plant, to disuade US strikes —*IRNA*

Officials involved in diplomatic efforts said talks were ongoing — but Iran has rejected the latest American proposal, and it was unclear if a deal would come in time.

> **More than 14 million proud Iranians have so far registered to sacrifice their lives to defend Iran. I too have been, am, and will remain devoted to giving my life for Iran.**
>
> —Masoud Pezeshkian, Iranian President

Yet, a senior US official told Axios that "If the President sees a deal is coming together, he'll probably hold off." However, the defence official was sceptical that there would be a breakthrough.

This comes as Pakistan, Egypt and Turkey are racing to find a diplomatic solution.

Axios also reported that Trump's negotiating team, Vice President JD Vance, envoy Steve Witkoff and son-in-law Jared Kushner, think that he should try for a deal. However, Israel, Saudi Arabia and UAE, are urging the US leader against accepting a ceasefire. —*Agencies*

Pak warns against strikes on Saudi

Videos released by the IDF show the magnitude of Israel's bombing in Lebanon —*SCREENGRAB*

WASHINGTON, 7 APRIL

Pakistan's military on Tuesday said that Iran's recent attacks on Saudi Arabia risk undermining ongoing diplomatic initiatives.

The remarks came during a meeting of top commanders chaired by Army Chief Field Marshal Asim Munir, according to a statement from the military.

It said the military strongly condemned Iran's recent attacks on Saudi Arabia's petrochemical and industrial facilities, calling them an "unnecessary escalation" that could spoil "sincere efforts to resolve the conflict through peaceful means".

The forum noted that Saudi Arabia's restraint "despite grave provocations" had helped enable mediation and diplomatic options.

Meanwhile, the King Fahd Causeway, a key bridge linking Saudi Arabia to Bahrain reopened after closing briefly amid threats from Iran.

DOZENS KILLED IN IRAN

Dozens of people were killed in Iran, including at least airstrike 18 people in the Alborz province. Iran's Red Crescent also said that US-Israeli forces killed an aid worker in Iran as Israel continued to pound Lebanon.

Israel's military said it attacked an Iranian petrochemical site in Shiraz, the second day in a row it hit such a facility.

3 KILLED IN ISTANBUL

Three gunmen opened fire at police outside a building housing the Israeli Consulate in Turkey's Istanbul on Tuesday, sparking a gunfight. All three assailants were killed and two police officers sustained slight injuries in the "terrorist" attack, authorities said. They are believed to have ties with the Islamic State. —*Agencies*

Unconscious Mojtaba receiving treatment in Qom: Report

LONDON, 7 APRIL

Iran's new Supreme Leader, Mojtaba Khamenei, is receiving medical treatment in Qom city of Iran, The Times UK reported on Tuesday, citing a diplomatic memo.

The diplomatic memo is "understood" to be based on US and Israel intelligence shared with Gulf allies, the publication said. The memo suggests that Khamenei is unconscious and being treated for a "severe" medical condition, the report said. The Times said he was not involved in any decision making, but did not say who was. US intelligence agencies have not commented on the report.

Salar could not independently verify the claims. Previous reports have said that Mojtaba fled to Russia or was already dead. However, Mojtaba has not been seen since he has taken charge, leading to speculations that he is injured or dead. However, Iran and Russia said that he is not appearing in public due to a fear of being assassinated.

Meanwhile, Mojtaba in an address read by a representative, said that assassinating Iran's leaders won't break the Islamic Republic's resolve. —*Agencies*

'MUST STOP THEIR NUKES'

Not a war crime... if they're animals: Trump

WASHINGTON, 7 APRIL

President Donald Trump said on Monday he's "not at all" worried about committing possible war crimes if the US attacked Iran's bridges and power plants.

"You know the war crime?" Trump told reports at the White House. "The war crime is allowing Iran to have nuclear weapons."

Claiming that the Iranian government had killed 40,000 protesters in January, he said: "They're animals, and we have to stop them."

"We have a plan, because of the power of our military, where every bridge in Iran will be decimated by 12 o'clock tomorrow night," Trump said.

Power plants in Iran, he continued, would be "burning, exploding and never to be used again". Trump refused to say whether any civilian targets would be off limits in the US response.

However, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warned that attacking civilian infrastructure is banned under international law, his spokesman said Monday. Several countries, including France, have also echoed similar concerns.

ISRAEL PREPS FOR LONG BATTLE

Israeli army preparing for at least three weeks of battle against Iran if a ceasefire isn't reached, the military's chief spokesman, Brig Gen Effie Defrin said. —*PTI*

> **We've had numerous intercepts (from Iranian people saying) 'please keep bombing'... And these are people that are living where the bombs are exploding. And when we leave and we're not hitting those areas, they're saying 'please come back'. They want their freedom.**
>
> —Donald Trump, US President

US to set up tolls in Hormuz?

Asked about Iran reportedly charging a toll for ships passing through the Strait of Hormuz, Trump suggested that the US could do the same if it secured the narrow waterway. "I'd rather do that than let them have them," he added. "Why shouldn't we? We're the winner." He then said that he was for the free transit of oil.

'Kurds stole Iran protesters' guns'

The US tried to send "a lot of guns" to Iranian protesters during the deadly demonstrations in December and January through Kurdish groups, but "the Kurds kept them", Trump told Fox News. Iran repeatedly justified its crackdown, which killed at least 7,000 people, by alleging the protesters were Israel and US agents.

'Kim called Biden mentally retarded'

Trump said that North Korean leader Kim Jong Un used to call former president Joe Biden "mentally retarded", as he flayed Australia, Japan, NATO, and South Korea for not helping open the Hormuz. "We've got 50,000 soldiers in Japan to protect them from North Korea; we have 45,000 soldiers in South Korea to protect us from Kim Jong Un."

'Bizman first' Don wants Iran's oil

Trump said that the US could secure the Iranian oil, saying, "I'm a businessman first". He said that the winner should always take the "spoils" after a war, but the US hadn't been doing it even from World War 2. However, he refused to commit to the idea.

May run for Venezuelan Prez, Trump 'jokes' again

WASHINGTON, 7 APRIL

Trump again claimed he polled higher than anybody ever has in Venezuela, and that he might consider running for President there after completing his US term.

US forces captured president Nicolas Maduro and his wife Cilia Flores in January to face drug trafficking trials in the US. Delcy Rodriguez took over as acting President shortly after. She had a 90-day tenure, but she completed that on Friday and is continuing on in the role. It is unclear how much longer she will continue.

"I will quickly learn Spanish. It won't take too long. I'm good at language, and I will go to Venezuela. I'm going to run for president. But we're very happy with the president-elect that we have right now," Trump said.

> - US captured president Nicolas Maduro and his wife Cilia Flores in January. While Maduro is technically still President, Rodriguez has been acting President since, crossing her 90-day tenure

Trump also said the conflict with Venezuela was "over in 45 minutes", and boasted that the US has now taken hundreds of millions of barrels of oil from the country, which paid for "that war many times over". —*PTI*

WHO suspends Gaza work after worker among 10 killed

After separate Israeli strikes killed at least 10 people in a Gaza, including a contract worker for the World Health Organisation, WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said that the UN agency would suspend medical evacuation from Gaza via the Rafah crossing to Egypt. Two other health workers were injured in the strikes.

UAE helpless now: Pak senator on loan repayment

Pakistan Senator Mushahid Hussain said that Islamabad's move to repay its multi-billion dollar debt to the United Arab Emirates was not a financial obligation, but as an act of "brotherly rescue" for a nation he claims is currently "stuck and helpless." He said that Pakistan had a moral responsibility to help the UAE in a time of crisis.

VACCINATIONS UNDERWAY

100 children die in B'desh measles outbreak

DHAKA, 7 APRIL

Bangladesh is conducting emergency measles-rubella vaccinations while trying to contain an ongoing outbreak that has killed more than 100 children in less than a month.

The government, in tandem with World Health Organisation, the UN children's agency and the Gavi vaccine alliance, began vaccination of children aged 6 months to 5 years old in 18 high-risk districts on Sunday and will expand nationwide in phases from next month, a joint statement said.

A UNICEF official said the agency was deeply concerned about the sharp rise in cases, which puts the youngest and most vulnerable children at risk. "This resurgence highlights critical immunity gaps, particularly among zero-dose and under-vaccinated children, while infections among infants under nine months, who are not yet eligible for routine vaccination, are especially alarming," said Rana Flowers, the agency's representative in Bangladesh.

A nurse treats a child suffering from measles at the Infectious Diseases Hospital in Dhaka, Bangladesh, on Monday —*PTI*

More than 900 cases of measles have been confirmed among 7,500 suspected cases reported since 15 March, in the nation of more than 170 million people. Measles is a highly contagious airborne disease causing fever, respiratory symptoms and a characteristic rash and can sometimes have severe or fatal complications, especially in young children, as per WHO.

Vaccination is crucial to preventing measles, but the WHO says 95 per cent of the population has to be vaccinated in order to stop it from spreading.

Bangladesh's Health Minister Sardar Mohammed Sakhawat Husain in Parliament blamed the previous governments for the outbreak. —*PTI*

Pro-Orban Vance visits Hungary ahead of polls

BUDAPEST, 7 APRIL

US Vice President **JD Vance** arrived in Budapest on Tuesday to bolster Viktor Orban's campaign as Hungary's election approaches. The two-day visit, including meetings with Orban and a campaign rally, signals strong US backing for Hungary's Prime Minister, who is trailing in polls ahead of the vote on 12 April. Orban, in power since 2010, seeks a fifth term amid a tough race against Péter Magyar's centre-right Tisza party.

Critics accuse Orban of undermining Hungary's institutions, press freedom, and fostering corruption, which he denies. He remains a figure in the global far-right movement, endorsed by Trump and aligned with his policies on immigration, LGBTQ+ rights, and media control. Vance and his wife Usha were welcomed warmly at Budapest airport by Foreign Minister Péter Szijjarto, with Szijjarto presenting Usha with flowers.

US support for Orban has been evident through exemptions from sanctions and high-profile visits, reflecting shared far-right interests. Orban's ties with Trump and mutual admiration have strengthened, despite tensions with Europe over Ukraine. Orban remains defiant, calling support for his opponent a violation of Hungary's sovereignty. —*PTI*

—PTI

Silver declines by nearly 1%; Gold falls to Rs 1.53L/g

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

Silver prices declined by Rs 2,000 to Rs 2.40 lakh per kilogram, while gold slipped to Rs 1.53 lakh per 10g in the national capital on Tuesday as investors turned cautious ahead of US President Donald Trump's deadline to Iran for reopening the Strait of Hormuz. According to the All India Sarafa Association, the white metal depreciated by Rs 2,000, or nearly 1 per cent, to Rs 2,40,000 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes). In the bullion market, gold of 99.9 per cent purity also slipped by Rs 600, or 0.4 per cent, to Rs 1,53,200 per 10g (inclusive of all taxes). It settled at Rs 1,53,800 per 10g in the previous market session. Spot gold edged higher at USD 4,659.16 per ounce, while silver slipped nearly 1 per cent to USD 72.14 per ounce. —PTI

Rupee falls 10P, closes at 93.00 against USD

MUMBAI, 7 APRIL

The rupee depreciated 10 paise to close at 93.00 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday, as investors remained on edge ahead of US President Donald Trump's deadline for the opening of the Strait of Hormuz and the Reserve Bank's monetary policy review. Forex traders said the USD/INR pair is trading under pressure, dragged down by unabated withdrawal of foreign capital, a firm dollar, and higher crude oil prices amid a volatile geopolitical situation. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 93.05 against the US dollar, during the day, the rupee also touched an intraday high of 92.86 against the greenback. The dollar index was down 0.15 per cent at 99.83. —PTI

Samsung registers record Q1 earnings on AI chips

SEOUL, 7 APRIL

Samsung Electronics announced its highest-ever quarterly earnings for January-March, driven by surging demand for AI-related memory chips, according to The Korea Herald. The company reported an operating profit of USD 38 billion and revenue of USD 88.7 billion. Operating profit jumped 755 per cent from USD 4.46 billion last year, with revenue up 68.1 per cent from USD 52.8 billion. This surpassed Samsung's previous quarterly record and even exceeded its full-year earnings of USD 29.1 billion in 2025. Analysts attribute this to its semiconductor division, notably memory chips, with DRAM prices expected to rise significantly. Despite the results, Samsung's market cap of USD 830 billion remains below Nvidia's USD 4.3 trillion. —ANI

Time to hand over AI's reins: Campbell

Campbell's resignation comes months after AI crash; panel formed to find successor

MUMBAI, 7 APRIL

Air India CEO and Managing Director **Campbell Wilson** on Tuesday told the staff that it was the right time to hand over the reins for the airline's next phase of growth.

The Air India board has constituted a committee that will find the successor in the coming months, a statement from the airline said.

Wilson, who has decided to resign, has been at the helm for four years since mid-2022 and will remain with the airline to ensure a smooth succession.

"I am incredibly proud of what you have achieved, especially in the face of unprecedented headwinds in the form of aircraft delivery and supply chain challenges, two wars, crippling airspace closures and fuel prices and, most acutely, tragedy," Wilson said. He said that it was the right time to hand over the reins of the airline.

"With a brief window until bulk deliveries from the nearly 600-strong aircraft order book commence in earnest from 2027, the time is right for me to hand over the reins for the next phase of Air India's rise," Wilson said.

The loss-making airline, acquired by the Tata Group from the government in January 2022, has been facing various headwinds even as it is in the middle of an ambitious transformation plan.

In his message to the staff, Wilson listed out the acquisition and successful merger of four airlines, an evolution from public to private sector practices, along with wholesale renewal of the leadership team, workforce, culture and ways of operating as among the key developments. Listing out the strides made, Wilson said the airline has seen the complete modernisation of systems, the launch of new physical products, the deployment of elevated service and operational standards on ground and in the air, as well as 100 additional aircraft added to the fleet. —PTI

Air India to impose fuel surcharge

MUMBAI, 7 APRIL

The Air India group on Tuesday said it will impose fuel surcharge ranging from Rs 299 to Rs 899 for domestic flights and USD 24 to USD 280 for international flights, excluding some routes.

The revised fuel surcharge, effective from 8 April will be applicable for flights operated by the airline's low-cost subsidiary Air India Express as well, Air India said in a statement.

Revisions to fuel surcharge on flights to and from Bangladesh and Far East destinations such as Japan, Hong Kong, and South Korea, will be advised in due course subject to the requisite regulatory approvals, it said.

Following the government's decision to cap domestic Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) price hike at 25 per cent, Air India group has adopted this calibrated approach, transitioning from a flat domestic surcharge to a distance-based grid, the airline said.

Further, in the absence of any mitigation on international ATF prices, the Air India group will be implementing more significant changes to fuel surcharges.

Air India continues to absorb a significant portion of this increased fuel cost on international routes, the company said. ATF accounts for almost 40-45 per cent of an airline's total cost. —PTI

Crude prices hit record high

—AI

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

Crude oil prices rose nearly 3 per cent to hit a record high of Rs 10,888 per barrel in futures trade on Tuesday, tracking strong global cues as tensions between the US and Iran intensified ahead of President Donald Trump's deadline for reopening the Strait of Hormuz.

On the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), crude oil for April delivery increased by Rs 300, or 2.83 per cent, to hit a lifetime high of Rs 10,888 per barrel.

Similarly, the May contract also advanced Rs 170, or 1.82 per cent, to touch a fresh record high of Rs 9,485 per barrel on the MCX.

"Crude oil prices remained firm as geopolitical tensions intensified ahead of US President Donald Trump's deadline for Iran, keeping markets highly sensitive to every development surrounding the Strait of Hormuz," Kaveri More, Commodity Analyst at Choice Broking, said. Threats of potential strikes on Iranian infrastructure and warnings from Tehran of retaliation against Gulf energy assets have heightened fears of supply disruptions, overshadowing diplomatic efforts toward a ceasefire, she added.

In the international market, West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures for the May delivery gained USD 4.14, or 3.7 per cent to USD 116.55 per barrel, while Brent oil for the June contract rose 1.5 per cent to USD 111.40 per barrel in New York.

Investors are now closely monitoring developments in West Asia, with volatility expected to remain high as geopolitical risks continue to dominate energy markets. —PTI

NSE, S&P Global to launch dated Brent Crude futures

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

The National Stock Exchange of India (NSE) announced a strategic partnership with S&P Global Energy to introduce exchange-traded derivatives based on Platts physical spot market benchmarks. NSE plans to initially launch Dated Brent Crude Oil (Platts) futures contracts, based on the Platts Dated Brent benchmark, scheduled for 13 April 2026. The collaboration with S&P Global Energy, a provider of data and benchmark prices, offers domestic participants access to international reference prices via NSE's platform.

The contracts aim to serve refiners, importers, traders, financial institutions, and investors seeking exposure to global Brent crude markets. Sriram Krishnan, NSE's Chief Business Development Officer, said, "This collaboration with S&P Global Energy marks a milestone in NSE's journey to build relevant commodity derivatives in India."

Matthew Eversman of Platts added, "Partnering with NSE is a significant step, recognising the transparency of Platts benchmarks." The move is expected to enhance market transparency and credibility. —PTI

It's a bull run: Mkts rally for 4th day

MUMBAI, 7 APRIL

Stock market benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty ended higher on Tuesday, as a drop in crude oil prices and a rally in global markets calmed investors' sentiment.

Also, buying in IT stocks aided recovery in the markets after early losses.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 509.73 points, or 0.69 per cent, to settle at 74,616.58. During the day, it hit a high of 74,686.32 and a low of 73,282.41, gyrating 1,403.91 points.

The 50-share NSE Nifty climbed 155.40 points, or 0.68 per cent, to end at 23,123.65.

From the 30-Sensex firms, Tata Consultancy Services, HCL Tech, Infosys, Bharti Airtel, Sun Pharma, and Hindustan Unilever were among the major gainers.

InterGlobe Aviation, Adani Ports, Mahindra & Mahindra, and Titan were among the laggards.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, dropped 0.71 per cent to USD 109 per barrel.

Sectorally, BSE-Focused IT jumped 2.46 per cent, IT (2.37 per cent), realty (1.70 per cent), metal (1.55 per cent), commodities (0.83 per cent), hospitals (0.83 per cent) and FMCG (0.71 per cent).

PSU banks, consumer durables, services, BSE MidSmall Private Banks Quality Tilt and consumer discretionary were the laggards.

A total of 2,671 stocks advanced while 1,555 declined and 155 remained unchanged on the BSE.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 8,167.17 crore on Monday, according to exchange data. —PTI

MSMEs hit by war to get ₹2.5L cr credit, says Govt

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

The government is considering a Rs 2.5 lakh crore credit guarantee scheme to support businesses, especially MSMEs impacted by the West Asia crisis, sources said.

Under the scheme, a credit guarantee of about 90 per cent on loans of up to Rs 100 crore would be provided to lenders in case of default by borrowers due to the ongoing US-Iran conflict.

The guarantee on bank loans would be provided by the National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company (NCGTC), a wholly-owned subsidiary of the government.

The government would have to provide about Rs 17,000 crore to Rs 18,000 crore for the scheme.

Sources said the scheme was a huge success during the COVID-19 pandemic and helped many businesses across various sectors to stay afloat and clear their dues.

The government in May 2020 announced the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) as part of the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan to support eligible Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and other eligible business enterprises in meeting their operational liabilities and restarting their businesses in the context of the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

ECLGS covered almost all the sectors of the economy, and a 100 per cent guarantee was provided to Member Lending Institutions (MLIs) in respect of the credit facility extended by them under the scheme to eligible borrowers. —PTI

ORACLE APPOINTS NEW CFO DAYS AFTER MASSIVE GLOBAL LAYOFFS

TEXAS, 7 APRIL

After laying off thousands across its offices worldwide, Oracle has appointed a new Chief Financial Officer (CFO) **Hilary Maxson** in what is reported to be a move aimed at addressing the rising demand for AI and cloud services. The move marks a fresh beginning for Oracle.

Maxson's appointment comes into effect immediately. She has come to Oracle 'with experience in infrastructure and energy to steer its efforts to meet surging demand for artificial intelligence and cloud services,' a company note said.

Maxson has worked as group CFO at Schneider Electric, an energy management and automation company with over $45 billion in annual revenue before joining Oracle.

Oracle's official filing stated that Maxson will get an annual base salary of $950,000, besides a performance-based bonus with a target of $2.5 million.

She has also been granted equity worth $26 million. Of this, $20.8 million will be given as time-based equity, which will vest over four years. The remaining $5.2 million will be performance-based equity, linked to firm's targets & long-term goals. —Agencies

DoT extends Vi's AGR reassessment deadline to June

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) expects to complete the AGR reassessment for Vodafone Idea (VIL) by June, according to sources. The review was initially scheduled for completion by 31 March. The reassessment process includes the Spectrum Usage Charge (SUC), following an internal licence fee review by the Controller of Communication Accounts.

The Union Cabinet has provided relief to VIL, freezing its AGR dues at Rs 87,695 crore for the period from FY 2006-07 to FY 2018-19, based on the Supreme Court order. These 'frozen' dues are subject to reassessment. The amount excludes AGR dues for FY 2017–18 and FY 2018–19, which the Court's 2020 order finalised as payable.

In response to a Lok Sabha question in February, Minister of State for Communications Pemmasani Chandra Sekhar said VIL's frozen AGR dues as of 31 December, 2025, will also undergo reassessment in line with deduction verification guidelines. —PTI

UPI TO COST 1.25X MORE

Toll plazas to go cashless from 10 April: Ministry

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

Cash payments at toll plazas will be discontinued for travellers on national highways from 10 April, the road transport and highways ministry has said.

In a gazette notification, the ministry has said that in cases where a vehicle enters a fee plaza without a valid FASTag, users can still pay via Unified Payment Interface (UPI), but at a higher charge of 1.25 times the applicable toll fee.

A senior NHAI official said that the move is aimed at reducing long queues at toll gates and make highway travel smoother for commuters.

The official said that cash payments will no longer be accepted at the toll booths from 10 April and FASTag will remain the primary mode of toll collection, while UPI will serve as the fallback payment option for vehicles that arrive without a valid FASTag.

The move is aimed at reducing long queues at toll gates and make highway travel smoother for commuters —PTI

"If the user of a vehicle enters a fee plaza without a FASTag or a valid functional FASTag, as the case may be, and opts to pay fee through the Unified Payment Interface (UPI), he shall pay 1.25 times of the user fee applicable to that category of vehicle in accordance with the provisions of sub-rule (2) of rule 4."

"Provided that if the owner or driver of the vehicle does not opt to pay a fee in the manner specified under this rule, such vehicle shall be dealt in accordance with rule 14," the notification said.

- In a gazette notification, the ministry has said that in cases where a vehicle enters a fee plaza without a valid FASTag, users can still pay via UPI, but at a higher charge of 1.25 times the applicable toll fee.

Recently, NHAI also crossed 50 lakh subscribers for its FASTag annual pass, which allows users to make up to 200 toll crossings for Rs 3,000 per year. Since its launch on 15 August, a total of 26.55 crore transactions have been carried out through these passes.

There are over 1,150 fee plazas on various National Highways and Expressways in the country. —PTI

Anthropic revenue surges past $30B from $9B

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

Anthropic's run-rate revenue has exceeded USD 30 billion, a significant rise from approximately USD 9 billion at the end of 2025, according to the company.

"Demand from Claude customers has accelerated in 2026. Our run-rate revenue has now surpassed USD 30 billion — up from approximately USD 9 billion at the end of 2025," Anthropic stated.

The surge follows increased demand from Claude clients throughout 2026, with the number of business customers spending over USD 1 million annually doubling.

During its February Series G fundraising, the company reported 500 such clients, but now exceeds 1,000, doubling in less than two months.

Anthropic also announced a new agreement with Google and Broadcom to secure multiple gigawatts of next-generation Tensor Processing Unit (TPU) capacity.

"This expansion of our computer infrastructure will power our Claude models and serve global demand," the company said.

Most of the new capacity will be in the US, deepening its USD 50 billion investment plan.

Despite the deal, Anthropic continues to train Claude across multiple hardware platforms, including AWS Trainium, Google TPUs, and NVIDIA GPUs. —PTI

— ANI

Maguire signs contract extension at Man United

MANCHESTER, 7 APRIL

Harry Maguire has signed a one-year extension at Manchester United, with an option for a further 12 months. The England defender was set to be out of contract at the end of this season. "Harry represents the mentality and resilience required to perform for Manchester United. He is the ultimate professional who brings invaluable experience and leadership to our young, ambitious squad," said director of football Jason Wilcox. Maguire joined United from Leicester in 2019 for a record £80 million. He has won the FA Cup and League Cup and made 266 appearances. At 33, he regained his place after losing it in 2023 and has been recalled to England's squad. "Representing Manchester United is the ultimate honour. It makes myself and my family proud," he said. "I am delighted to extend my journey to at least eight seasons and continue playing in front of our supporters." —PTI

Fan dies of cardiac arrest at German Bundesliga match

FRANKFURT, 7 APRIL

An 87-year-old Eintracht Frankfurt supporter died in hospital after suffering a cardiac arrest during a Bundesliga match against Cologne, the club announced Tuesday. The incident occurred during the second half of the 2-2 draw. "The 87-year-old, a long-standing member and season ticket holder, suffered a cardiac arrest during the match. Although he was successfully resuscitated, his condition could not be stabilised," Frankfurt said. They added, "Our thoughts and sympathy are with his family and friends. We thank the emergency services for their efforts, which were ultimately in vain, and fans for their sensitivity." In October, another fan died after falling ill entering a German Cup game.—PTI

—PTI

India U17 women's footballers to play friendlies in Russia

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

The Indian U17 women's football team will play three friendly matches against Russia in Sochi from 11 to 17 April, with head coach Pamela Conti naming a 23-member squad. The matches will be on 11, 14 and 17 April at the Matsesta Football Centre. The team, preparing for the AFC U17 Women's Asian Cup in China, arrived in Sochi late on Monday. Last month, they played two friendlies in Yangon, winning both (2-0 and 3-2). After returning, they continued training in Bengaluru. In the Asian Cup, India will face Australia, Japan, and Lebanon in Group B. All matches are scheduled at 14.30 hrs IST. The squad aims to excell in the competition. It has goalkeepers Munni and Surajmuni.—PTI

Abhay loses to No. 7 Ibrahim in 5-game match

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

Top-ranked Indian Abhay Singh went down in a five-game thriller to world No 7 Youssef Ibrahim of Egypt in the men's second round of the El Gouna Open squash, a PSA Platinum event, in El Gouna, Egypt. World No 25 Abhay began strongly, winning the opening and third games on Monday. But the Egyptian sixth seed wrested control to advance with a hard-fought 7-11 11-9 9-11 11-5 11-8 victory in 68 minutes.—PTI

Delhi Capitals seek runs from top-order

Gujarat Titans is under fire as its batting order failed to fire in previous matches

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

Delhi Capitals will be expecting runs from their KL Rahul-led top-order as they try to maintain their winning momentum against faltering Gujarat Titans in the IPL here on Wednesday.

Delhi Capitals have had a near perfect couple of games with the ball while Sameer Rizvi, 22, has been carrying the bulk of their batting load.

If Rahul and Co. get into the groove, Delhi Capitals will become a more formidable unit.

Rahul can't be blamed for the way he got out in his first two innings.

Nitish Rana would be feeling more pressure having got the opportunity to bat at number three.

Pathum Nissanka found his range in the last game here, giving him additional confidence to take on the Gujarat Titans pace duo of Kagiso Rabada and Mohammed Siraj.

Having smashed his third IPL 50 in a row (one came last season), Rizvi is on a rampage.

In contrast, Gujarat Titans is faltering on both fronts.

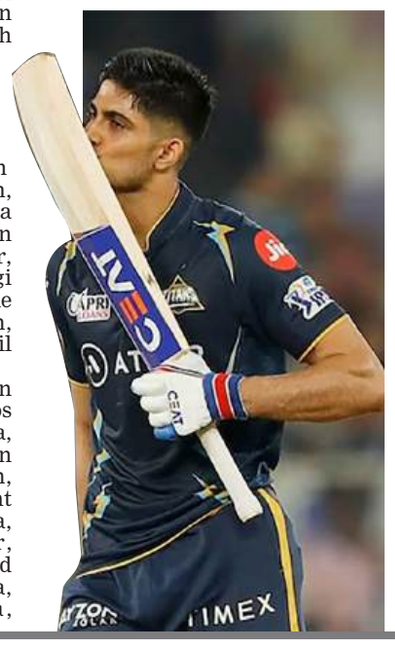
Titans have been struggling to shed the top-heavy tag. They should have chased 205 against Rajasthan Royals comfortably but the unproven middle-order could not cash in on the start provided by Sai Sudharsan.The middle order needs to step up.

Squads:

Delhi Capitals: Axar Patel (c), Abishek Porel, Karun Nair, KL Rahul, Nitish Rana, Sameer Rizvi, Tristan Stubbs, Ashutosh Sharma, Madhav Tiwari, Dushmantha Chameera, Kuldeep Yadav, Mukesh Kumar, Vipraj Nigam, Mitchell Starc, Tripurana Vijay, David Miller, Ben Duckett, Auqib Nabi Dar, Pathum Nissanka, Lungi Ngidi, Prithvi Shaw, Kyle Jamieson, T Natarajan, Ajay Jadav Mandal, Sahil Parakh.

Gujarat Titans: Shubman Gill (c), Anuj Rawat, Jos Buttler, Kumar Kushagra, Shahrukh Khan, Glenn Phillips, Rashid Khan, Manav Suthar, Nishant Sindhu, Rahul Tewatia, Washington Sundar, Gurnoor Brar, Mohammed Siraj, Prasidh Krishna, Kagiso Rabada, Ravisrinivasan Sai Kishore, Jayant Yadav, Ishant Sharma, Ashok Sharma, Jason Holder, Tom Banton, Prithvi Raj Yarra, Luke Wood, Sai Sudharsan, Arshad Khan.

Match starts 7.30pm. — PTI



IPL LOSING RS 2,400 CRORE, CLAIMS LALIT MODI

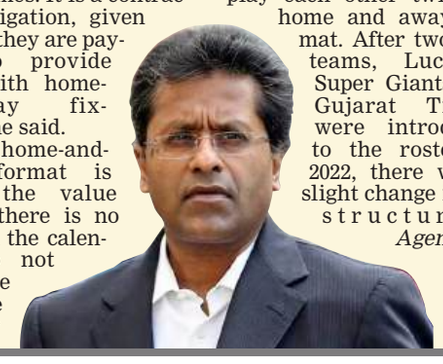
MUMBAI, 7 APRIL

Former IPL commissioner Lalit Modi exposed how the latest league structure is leading to a Rs 2,400 crore loss for the BCCI and franchises.

"For every game, the BCCI gets 50 per cent, and the remaining 50 per cent is distributed to the teams. So teams are now losing out on 20 games. It is a contractual obligation, given the fees they are paying, to provide them with home-and-away fixtures," he said.

"The home-and-away format is where the value lies. If there is no space in the calendar, do not increase the number of teams. It is as simple as that. That is not what we sold. Has everybody signed off on this? I guarantee they have not. Why are they not playing home and away? There are excuses, but it is a contractual obligation and a commercial transaction for the teams," he added.

Modi said all franchises were initially planned to play each other twice in home and away format. After two new teams, Lucknow Super Giants and Gujarat Titans, were introduced to the roster in 2022, there was a slight change in the structure. — *Agencies*



Islam Bulbul removed as BCB president

DHAKA, 7 APRIL

Days after Bangladesh Cricket Board reached out to BCCI requesting the revival of bilateral ties, former skipper and current president of BCB Aminul Islam Bulbul was on Tuesday removed by the country's National Sports Council (NSC).

Aminul Islam Bulbu —PTI

The NSC has formed an 11-member ad-hoc committee headed by Tamim Iqbal (president), to run the day-to-day affairs till fresh elections are held.

According to sources in the BCB, Bulbul was removed primarily due to the fiasco during the T20 World Cup where erstwhile interim government advisor Asif Nazrul literally held the former skipper hostage and didn't allow the national team to visit India for the global event.

Anti-India hardliner Nazrul's stand was to shift Bangladesh's games from Kolkata and Mumbai to Sri Lanka as a mark of protest for removal of Mustafizur Rahaman from the IPL.

During the whole issue, Bulbul was a mere bystander and over the past few days, six directors of the BCB resigned because of him.

Former Bangladesh skipper and country's greatest opener Tamim Iqbal has been named as head of the 11-member ad-hoc committee, whose duty would be to hold the cricket board's election in the next 90 days.

According to NSC Director Aminul Ehsan, the decision to dissolve the current BCB board and put forth an ad-hoc committee has been intimated to the International Cricket Council (ICC).

The ICC charter doesn't allow government or external interference in board matters. It is unlikely that the global body will ban the Bangladesh board as a timeline to hold the elections has already been announced by the NSC. —PTI

Shooters Palak and Mukesh win gold with world record

GRANADA, 7 APRIL

Indian shooters Palak and Mukesh Nelavalli shattered the world record on way to winning a gold medal in 10m air pistol mixed team competition at the ISSF World Cup for rifle and and pistol here on Tuesday.

The Indian duo aggregated 487.7 to clinch the top prize, which is also a junior world record.

The pair showcased strong form in the qualification round too, securing a spot in the medal match with a score of 581-17x.

China's Qianxun Yao and Kai Hu bagged the silver medal with 484.8, while Hungary's Veronika Major and Akos Karoly Nagy settled for bronze with a combined total of 414.9 in the final.

Indian shooters Palak and Mukesh Nelavalli shattered the world record on way to winning a gold medal. —PTI

While Palak hit 243.0 in the final, Mukesh scored 244.7.

Palak and Mukesh were second in the qualifications, behind the Chinese duo that scored 586-23x.

Palak, 18, won the 10m air pistol gold and team silver at 2023 Asian Games. —PTI

Indian women's hockey team to play in Argentina

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

The Indian senior women's hockey team will tour Argentina for a four-match series, set to be held at the CeNARD in Buenos Aires from 13-17 April.

Indian team will play its matches on 13, 14, 16, and 17 April at Argentina's National Centre of High Performance Athletics (also known as CeNARD).

India and Argentina have enjoyed competitive encounters in recent years, including a thrilling 2-2 draw decided by shootout in the FIH Pro League 2024–25 last June.

This upcoming tour will offer valuable match practice against quality international opposition ahead of the FIH Hockey World Cup in Belgium and Netherlands and the Asian Games later this year.

Chief coach Sjoerd Marijne said, "We are travelling to Argentina with a squad of 24 players, and that is a very deliberate choice. This tour is about giving more players chance to perform at highest level against Argentina, one of the best teams in the world. —PTI

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Arsenal to face Lisbon after defeats in a row

LISBON, 7 APRIL

Arsenal faces Sporting Lisbon in the Champions League quarterfinals on Tuesday after seeing its quadruple hunt cut in half.

Back-to-back defeats in the League Cup final and FA Cup quarterfinals have left Mikel Arteta's team chasing a double of the Premier League and Champions League.

They were always the priorities, but the danger for Arsenal is that the slump continues.

Arteta says the questions about his team are to be expected, despite it still leading the Premier League by nine points and having won all but one of its games in the Champions League this season.

"It's been like this for the last nine months and that's going to continue, that's never going to change when you play at this level for this club," he said ahead of the match at Estadio Jose Alvalade.

"You have to live the present, you have to deliver it every day."

Arteta said Arsenal would be without the injured Bukayo Saka and Jurrien Timber, but Declan Rice and Gabriel are available.

Sporting has never been beyond the quarterfinals of the Champions League."We want to make our dreams reality and continue to make history," coach Borges said.—PTI

Asia C'ships: Sindhu, Sen to lead India campaign

NINGBO, 7 APRIL

India's campaign at the Badminton Asia Championships 2026 will be spearheaded by top singles shutters PV Sindhu and Lakshya Sen, in the absence of star men's doubles pair Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty due to a shoulder injury to Satwik, beginning in Ningbo, China, from Tuesday.

The continental meet, being held in Ningbo for the third consecutive time, will feature a strong Indian contingent across categories despite the late withdrawal of the Asian Games champions in men's doubles, according to Olympics.com.

Sindhu, a two-time Olympic medallist and former world champion, will mark her return to competitive badminton for the first time since her quarter-final appearance at the Indonesia Masters in January.

In men's singles, Lakshya enters the tournament in red-hot form after finishing runner-up at the All England Open. The 24-year-old will be joined by experienced campaigners HS Prannoy and Kidambi Srikanth, both former world championship medallists, along with rising talent Ayush Shetty.

- Sindhu, a two-time Olympic medallist,will return to competitive badminton since she appeared in Indonesia Masters in January

Amsakarunan-M R Arjun and Pruthvi K R-Sai Pratheek K.

Sindhu will headline the women's singles draw, where she will be accompanied by Malvika Bansod, Unnati Hooda and promising youngster Tanvi Sharma.

In women's doubles, India will field three pairs following the withdrawal of Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand.

the mixed doubles campaign will be led by Dhruv Kapila and Tanisha Crasto. —ANI

CAUGHT IN RANDOM BREATH TEST

Aus legend David Warner arrested for drunk driving

MAROUBRA, 7 APRIL

Former Australian cricketer David Warner has been charged with drink driving, according to news.com.au.

The former Australian cricketer reportedly blew twice the legal limit after undergoing a breath test on Sunday night at Maroubra in Sydney.

In a statement provided to news.com.au, NSW Police said that Warner was stopped before he reached for the testing. However, officers approached and subjected him to a breath test, which returned a positive result.

The statement added that the 39-year-old was arrested and then taken to Maroubra Police Station after a second test allegedly returned a reading of 0.104.

- NSW Police said that Warner was stopped before he reached for the testing.Officers subjected him to a breath test

At around 5.30pm on 5 April, 2026, the police were conducting a stationary random breath testing on Malabar Road, Maroubra," the police statement said.

The Australian legend Warner retired from international cricket on 24 June 2024, after Australia's exit from the 2024 ICC Men's T20 World Cup.

The former Australian opener made his final international appearance against India in the Super 8 stage during the T20 World Cup 2024. This followed his earlier retirement from Test cricket in January 2024 and ODI cricket immediately after the 2023 ICC Men's ODI World Cup. — *ANI*

India face Asian Cup clash against Taipei

PATHUM THANI, 7 APRIL

India take on Chinese Taipei in their final Group C fixture of the AFC U20 Women's Asian Cup on Wednesday, with only a win keeping their quarter-final hopes alive.

Having lost their first two matches to Japan and Australia, both sides face identical situations, though India's goal difference of -11 is worse than Chinese Taipei's -7.

The Young Tigresses aim to finish among the two best third-placed teams across all groups to reach the knockout stage for the first time since 2004.

Their task could be eased if either Vietnam vs Bangladesh or Uzbekistan vs Jordan ends in a draw; otherwise, India must secure a big win to avoid finishing as the lowest-ranked third-placed side.

Forward Sulanjana Raul stressed the importance of a strong start and attacking efficiency, while defender Cindy Colney highlighted the need for improved defensive discipline.

Chinese Taipei coach Hsieh Chih-chun said both teams are evenly matched, praising India's attacking style and fighting spirit. —PTI

India will play Chinese Taipei in final Group C match on Wednesday.—CREDIT